

# **Open for Business**

# A Primer for Starting a Neighborhood Networks Center





A Publication of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



This publication was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist in the planning and development of Neighborhood Networks centers.

The guides in this series offer "how to" information on starting up a center, creating programs and identifying center partners; marketing and media outreach; center and program profiles and a wealth of resources.

Neighborhood Networks is a community-based initiative established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1995. Since then, hundreds of centers have opened throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. These centers provide residents of HUD-assisted and/or -insured properties with programs, activities and training promoting economic self-sufficiency. These guides contain examples of successful center initiatives and how you can replicate them.

This guide was published in 2001.

To receive copies of this publication or any others in the series, contact:

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All publications are available from the Neighborhood Networks Web site at:

www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org









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#### **Section 1: Introduction**

Every day, in HUD Multifamily communities nationwide, people are becoming economically self-sufficient because a Neighborhood Networks center located on the premises of their housing development is providing them with access to computer technology, educational programs, job training, health care information and other social services.

In rural, urban and suburban communities everywhere, Neighborhood Networks centers are successfully delivering programs and services that move people toward economic selfsufficiency. To do this, their efforts are strategic.

Operating a Neighborhood Networks center is like managing a business. To be successful there needs to be sound financial management, committed and experienced staff, product development that reaches the targeted population, strategic marketing and income generation.

But while center planners should operate the Neighborhood Networks center like a business, they should always be aware that the center is there to serve people and foster community development.

Open for Business, A Primer for Starting a Neighborhood Networks Center encourages center planners to think like businesspeople working in a nonprofit environment. Throughout this manual, center planners will learn that there are distinct advantages to becoming a 501(c) (3) organization but the emphasis is placed on adapting a businesslike approach, paying attention to the administrative and managerial responsibilities that lead to success.

This manual is designed for stakeholders interested in starting a Neighborhood Networks center. Each of its sections has a different focus and guides center planners through the process of center development.

#### How to Use This Manual

Each chapter of the manual focuses on an important aspect of center operation. This introduction provides an overview of the national initiative and the roles of centers.



- Section 2: Neighborhood Networks Annotated Resources provides links to important resources on the Web that correspond to each of the remaining sections of this manual.
- Section 3: The Foundation of Basic Business Decisions describes the benefits of becoming a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. It then reviews the process for developing a business plan for a center, getting the plan approved and opening the center.
- Section 4: Asset Mapping and Fund Development describes an alternative approach to the traditional needs assessment that focuses on the assets of a community rather than its liabilities or needs. This section also covers the process of developing a budget and the basics of proposal writing so center organizers can fund the operations of their centers.
- Section 5: Program Development outlines some potential programs that could be offered at a Neighborhood Networks center, provides guidance about how to decide the priorities for residents and gives tips about several types of programs commonly offered at centers. This section also describes communications strategies center organizers can use to inform target audiences within their community about their programs and successes.
- Section 6: Applying for and Obtaining Nonprofit Status describes the processes of applying to state government to file articles of incorporation and bylaws and to the IRS for nonprofit, tax-exempt status.
- Section 7: Partnership Development outlines the important process of forming partnerships between centers and local businesses, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, government agencies and others. For most centers, partners provide volunteers, in-kind donations and technical support that help sustain their operations. This section also offers tips for formalizing these relationships and sustaining them over time.
- Section 8: Evaluating and Promoting the Center covers the basics of program evaluation, an important aspect of center operations that provides rewards in future fund raising. It describes how to use an online tool called START to collect data on center programs and how to communicate results to critical audiences.
- Section 9: Timeline provides a sample timeline to implement the steps of planning and establishing a center outlined in this publication. Center planners can modify this timeline to correspond to their own resources and timeframes.

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Each chapter focuses on another important aspect of center operation. Have questions? Feel free to call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center at (888) 312-2743 and ask to speak to a technical assistance provider. Specially trained staff is available to help.

# **About Neighborhood Networks**

Neighborhood Networks is a community-based initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that encourages the development of community technology centers in privately owned HUD-assisted and/or –insured housing. By catering to the needs of children, adults and seniors and by virtue of their convenient location, centers are helping residents gain access to critical services that help them obtain better jobs, improve their education and achieve a better quality of life for themselves and their families. It was established in 1995.

From the outset, property owners and managers of HUD assistedand insured-housing embraced the concept of creating technology centers that bring digital opportunity and lifelong learning to residents. In just two years, more than 200 Neighborhood Networks centers opened; between 1997 and 1999, the number more than doubled. By mid-2001, there were well over 800 centers.

# **Communities Prosper With Neighborhood Networks**

By encouraging the creation of Neighborhood Networks centers in Multifamily properties, HUD is working to ensure that residents are given access to information technology and concomitant economic opportunities. Neighborhood Networks centers are proving to be important players in helping Americans – regardless of age, income, race, ethnicity, disability or geography – gain access to 21st century tools and skills.

## **Each Neighborhood Networks Center is Unique**

An important aspect of the Neighborhood Networks initiative is that no two centers are alike. Residents, property owners and managers establish local centers that are tailored to the needs of their communities. Centers are locally driven.

Neighborhood Networks was intentionally designed to be easily replicable in any community. Centers are easy to replicate



because they are not given programmatic parameters. While HUD provides technical assistance and limited funds to property owners, the specifics of programmatic development are left to center planners.

Typically, a Neighborhood Networks center is a room or series of rooms equipped with computers and located on site or near a HUD-assisted and/or –insured housing development.

Centers usually offer computer and Internet access, staff assistance and a range of training resources for residents. Center programs may include computer training, adult education and General Equivalency Diploma certification, after-school homework help, job readiness training, microenterprise development, health care information, and a variety of youth and adult social services.

To provide these programs and services, centers partner with businesses, government agencies, nonprofit, civic and faith-based organizations, and foundations which provide both cash and in-kind contributions. Centers are urged to become nonprofit organizations, which increases their opportunities for support.

# So Many Stakeholders, So Many Beneficiaries

Residents, property owners and managers, community stakeholders and the community at large all benefit from having a Neighborhood Networks center helping promote individual self-sufficiency.

- Residents gain convenient access to programs and services that can help them improve job skills, expand their education and become economically self-sufficient.
- ☐ Property owners can experience lower vacancy rates, a stabilized tenancy, reduced crime and improved community pride.
- □ Local partners have access to a new pool of potential employees and additional sources of business. Local partners can also meet their commitment to philanthropy and receive positive publicity through their involvement with centers.
- ☐ Communities benefit from safer neighborhoods, a more vibrant and connected population that works to improve education, expand employment opportunities and increase economic self-reliance

#### A Center's Financial Backbone

Neighborhood Networks is not a grant program. HUD provides limited financial assistance and can help property owners, managers and center staff identify additional funding sources.

# Neighborhood Networks Services

A Neighborhood Networks center can provide:

- ☐ Computer access and training
- ☐ Job readiness programs and support
- ☐ General Equivalency Diploma classes
- Adult education classes
- □ Literacy programs
- ☐ Youth education and recreation programs
- Anti-drug and crime prevention programs
- ☐ Health and wellness activities
- □ Child care services
- □ Transportation
- Microenterprise development
- □ Social services



The initiative encourages centers to become sustainable by developing partnerships with businesses, nonprofits, government and social services agencies, educational and health institutions, faith-based organizations, civic organizations and foundations which can provide cash and in-kind services.

# **HUD's Role in Neighborhood Networks**

HUD encourages the creation and expansion of Neighborhood Networks centers by guiding property owners, managers, and center staff through the Neighborhood Networks center development process and providing limited financial assistance. HUD also provides technical assistance which covers a wide variety of topics critical to center development and long-term sustainability, including partnership building, fundraising, grant-writing and business-plan development.

#### Available Resources

One of the unique advantages of a HUD Neighborhood Networks center is the scope of technical assistance options that is available to center planners at every state of a center's operation.

We've already told you about the technical assistance that is available by calling the Neighborhood Networks Information Center. While you are on the phone, inquire about the dozens of guides, fact sheets and other publications; conferences; workshops, mentoring and marketing materials that are available at no charge to Neighborhood Networks centers.

## **START Now!**

Keep this manual handy and refer to it often. Use its recommendations, like filing the center's business plan using the easy-to-use online Strategic Tracking And Reporting Tool, called START.

File your business plan with HUD and pending approval you soon will be a bonafide Neighborhood Networks center!

Welcome to the family of Neighborhood Networks centers nationwide.

# Neighborhood Networks Resources

Visit the Neighborhood Networks Web site for all of the information you will need for your center. From fundraising to childcare to new programs to START, the Web site has it all.

For general information: http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org

For START:

http://www.hud.gov/nnw/start newcenter/nnwbusiness.html

For all other Neighborhood Networks guides and toolkits: http://www.hud.gov/nnw/nnwr esources.html



# **Section 2: Neighborhood Networks Annotated Resources**

The chart below describes Web-based resources that are available to center planners as they begin planning and operating new centers. The resources correspond to each of the subsequent sections of the manual, so planners can refer to them as they progress through the planning and implementation process.

Many of these resources are located at the Neighborhood Networks Web site at http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org. This site provides information on all aspects of starting and sustaining a center. It should be the first place you look for information.

Other resources are available from government, nonprofit, and commercial sites. While HUD has evaluated these resources and believes them to be valuable to center planners, Web sites change constantly. HUD is not in a position to monitor these changes or evaluate the content based on the changing laws of all jurisdictions in the U.S., so it is important for visitors to these sites to determine the value of the content for themselves and to seek relevant legal, financial and other professional advice before proceeding with the recommendations from these sites.

General Neighborhood Networks resources	
http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org	Your first stop in planning your center.
http://wbt.neighborhoodnetworks.org/	Neighborhood Networks Web-based workshops
http://www.hud.gov/nnw/startnewcenter/nnwbusine	The Strategic Tracking And Reporting Tool (START). Create
ss.html	and edit a Neighborhood Networks business plan.
Section 3: The Foundation	
http://www.irs.gov	Provides links to all of the necessary 501(c)(3) forms and
	instructions on how to fill them out.
http://www.ctcnet.org/toc.htm	CTCnet's guide on developing a community technology center
	such as a Neighborhood Networks.
http://www.businesstown.com	Provides definitions of accounting and small business terms.
Section 4: Asset Mapping	·
http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html	The ABCD Institute's John Kretzman and John McKnight
	developed and spread the concept of asset mapping – great
	link to a workbook and other asset mapping materials
http://www.ctcnet.org/ch2.htm	CTCnet's guide to asset mapping and finding resources in the
	community.
http://www.madii.org/amhome/amhome.html	The Madii Institute's general information on asset mapping.
http://www.ctassets.org/library/glossary.cfm	An asset mapping glossary.
Section 5: Program Development	
http://www.iit.edu/~livewire/	Provides Internet training to youths in Chicago and online.
http://www2.ctcnet.org/ctcweb.asp?webcat=youthed	Links to potential children's programs.
http://www.careerpath.com	Lists jobs available in the community and links to local training.
http://www.lgta.org	The Land-Grant Training Alliance offers free online basic
	computer skills training.
http://www.managementhelp.org/prog_mng/np_pro	Basic Guide to Nonprofit Program Design and Marketing
gs.htm	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·



http://www.usworkforce.org	Gives information on the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and
inter-in-www.dowerntor-co.org	how a center can become a WIA training provider.
Section 6: 501(c)(3) Status	now a contact carried at the Calaming provider.
http://www.irs.gov	Provides links to all of the necessary 501(c)(3) forms and
- Inguiring of	instructions on how to fill them our.
http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq/18/85.html	Information of the IRS 990 form.
http://www.qual990.org/index.html	The Urban Institute's guide to the IRS 990 form.
http://www.allianceonline.org/faqs	Information on frequently asked questions regarding taxexemption.
http://nonprofit.about.com/library.weekly/aa050599	Provides suggestions on board or directors orientation
<u>.htm</u>	materials.
http://www.nass.org	The National Association of Secretaries of State has information regarding individual state's requirements for obtaining 501(c)(3) status.
Section 7: Partnership Development	
http://www.financeproject.org/ostpartners.htm	Information on partnerships between nonprofits and other organizations.
http://www.audit-	Resources to create partnerships to tackle complex problems
commission.gov.uk/comsafe/2_1.html	(link from the United Kingdom)
http://www.liscnet.org	Focuses on developing community through local partnerships.
National Partners as described in Section 7:	
http://www.aacc.nche.edu	American Association of Community Colleges
http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov	The Bureau of Primary Health Care
http://www.calstate.edu	California State University System
http://www.4woman.gov/COE/index.htm	Centers of Excellence in Women's Health
http://www.geocities.com/arttechycp/index.html	Digital Art Communities
http://www.hopeww.org	HOPE worldwide (HOPE)
http://www.ncoa.org	The National Council on the Aging (NCOA)
http://www.ncoa.org/CIN/cin_intro.html	The NCOA's Consumer Information Network
http://www.techforall.org	Technology For All
http://www.thinkquest.org	ThinkQuest
http://www.youthventure.org	Youth Venture
http://www.yar.org	Youth as Resources
Section 8: Evaluation	
http://www.wkkf.org/publications/enalhdbk/default.h	The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook is a good
<u>tml</u>	place to start when designing an evaluation.
http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm	A basic guide to program evaluation.
#anchor1575679	
http://www.united-way.org/outcomes	The United Way's overview of outcomes-based evaluation.
http://www.inetwork.org/repair/index.html	This site has guidelines for collecting information and analyzing data.
http://www.goa.gov/cgi-bin/ordtab.pl	The General Accounting Office has free books on designing evaluation, developing and using questionnaires, and interview techniques.



Other resources	
http://www.freeresumetips.com/resumetips/nonprof	Suggestions on how to cater your resume for non-profit
it.html	positions.
http://www.emedia1.mediainfo.com/emedia	Provides a searchable list of media contacts.
http://nonprofit.about.com/library/weekly/aa081297	Information from about.com regarding fundraising tips.
<u>.htm</u>	
http://www.cdfa.gov/public/cat-writing.htm	The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance provides
	information on how to develop a successful grant proposal.
http://www.ctb.lsi.ukans.edu	The University of Kansas' Community Toolbox includes
	suggested hiring references.
http://classroom.sba.gov	The Small Business Administration Classroom has resources
	available with information on staffing.
http://www.trainingsupersite.com	Offers ideas on staff development and training.
http://www.foundations.org	A directory of charitable grantmakers with information about
	corporate, private and community foundations.
http://www.tgci.com	The Grantsmanship Center provides grant information and
	grantsmanship training for federal, state and community
	foundations.
www.not-for-profit.org	The Nonprofit Resource Center has a wealth of information on
	grants and funding.
http://www.foundationcenter.org	The Foundation Center is an independent nonprofit information
	clearinghouse that collects, organizes, analyzes and
	disseminates information on foundations and corporate giving
	programs.
http://www.businesstown.com/marketing/lowcost-	Provides information on how to market your center on a frugal
marketing.asp	budget.
http://www.helping.org	Helps nonprofits find donations and volunteers.
http://www.compumentor.org	Offers nonprofits discounts on computer software.
http://www.giftsinkind.org	Offers nonprofits discounts on computer software.
http://www.npower.org	Offers advice on technology planning and grant writing.
http://www.technogrants.com/moretips.htm	Offers advice on writing successful grant proposals.

# 2.1 Neighborhood Networks' Publications

There are many Neighborhood Networks publications available to centers. These factsheets, guides and other publications can provide detailed information on almost all aspects of the initiative. To find out which publications are available, click here: <a href="http://www.hud.gov/nnw/resourcesforcenters/nnwpublications.html">http://www.hud.gov/nnw/resourcesforcenters/nnwpublications.html</a>
To order these Neighborhood Networks publications, call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center at (888) 312-2743.



#### Section 3: The Foundation of Basic Business Decisions

Section 3 describes the benefits of becoming a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Properties owned by nonprofits may not need to take this additional step because they can use the nonprofit status of the owner to attract donations to the center. Centers serving properties owned by forprofit businesses may wish to consider the benefits of establishing a tax-exempt nonprofit organization to operate the center. This section explores these benefits, and Section 6 describes the process for applying for establishing a tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

Section 3 also reviews the process for developing a business plan for a center using a valuable online tool called START, the Strategic Tracking And Reporting Tool. START walks users through the process of planning a center and, at the end, provides a business plan that can be submitted to the HUD Neighborhood Networks coordinator for approval. The business plan can also be presented to other potential funders.

In the final part of Section 3, center planners can find introductory information about staffing, volunteers and financial management required for the initial planning phase.

# 3.1 The First Decision: IRS Section 501(c)(3) status

Although it is not necessary, there are many benefits of being a nonprofit Neighborhood Networks center. Some centers operate successfully as a forprofit entity, but this manual provides information on how to obtain 501(c)(3) status. This is the first basic business decision that needs to be made.

Why is incorporation beneficial?

Often, incorporation is the first step toward tax exemption, which is a keystone in the nonprofit sector because it allows the organization to receive tax-deductible gifts and avoid paying taxes.

Also, if a Neighborhood Networks center becomes a nonprofit organization, it is appealing to funders and large grant institutions. The structure of the application generally means that the organization has a solid structure, and the ability to receive tax-exempt donations.

Most tax-exempt organizations are required by law to incorporate. There are at least eight great reasons to become a nonprofit organization:

☐ Cost savings: You are, or will be, making a profit. Despite the term "nonprofit," nonprofit organizations are allowed to make a profit.

#### Want more information?

Neighborhood Networks offers many guides and fact sheets relating to numerous topics in this manual. Call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center at (888) 312-2743, visit the Web site or use the reference to the publication order form in Section 2 to obtain these helpful tools. Here is some suggested reading for this section:

- Easy Step-by-Step
   Advice to Start a
   Neighborhood Networks
   Center
- The Benefits of Starting and Working with a Neighborhood Networks Center
- Resource Guide (Second Edition)



Because income is tax-free, in most cases, nonprofits are able to keep
and use more of the funds they raise.
Altruism: The focus of the center is on improving the community rather
than making a profit.
Cost savings: Mass mailings, usually done to attract members or
contributors, are cheaper than regular commercial mailings.
Cost savings: Many publications offer cheaper classified advertising
rates to nonprofit organizations.
Cost savings: Many Internet service providers offer discounted space
to nonprofit organizations. Having a presence on the World Wide Web
becomes increasingly important for an organization's visibility and
exposure. Discounted Internet rates can save a substantial amount of
money
<u>Cost savings</u> : Nonprofits are eligible for radio and television promotion
through free public service announcements.
Eligibility: Employees of nonprofit organizations can be eligible to
participate in job training, student-intern, work-study, and other federal,
state and local employment incentive programs where salaries are
substantially paid out of government funds.

Do any of the above situations apply to your new center? If so, you'll probably want to incorporate your center as a 501(c)(3).

Although there are many benefits to receiving 501(c)(3) status, there are some disadvantages. Most of them have to do with cost and paperwork required for establishing the nonprofit and completing tax returns each year. In addition, a great deal of time and energy are required for setting up accounting systems, record books and bank accounts, drafting bylaws, filing articles of incorporation and completing IRS forms.

It can take up to one year to receive provisional 501(c)(3) status.

Although there are disadvantages, the process is relatively easy and described in Section 6 of this manual.

# 3.2 Running a Neighborhood Networks center like a small business

One major misconception of becoming a nonprofit organization is that the center is not allowed to generate revenue or sell a product.

In fact, many nonprofits benefit from 501(c)(3) status by operating as a small business. Think of small businesses in your community. Although it provides a service to the community, it must be managed efficiently,

# Is there a difference between "nonprofit" and "not-for-profit"?

In technical terms, there is no perceived difference between the two terms. Legal statutes even refer to the two terms synonymously. The practical legal definition established by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), however, does make a distinction.

"Not for profit" refers to an activity, such as a hobby, for example. If a Neighborhood Networks resident enjoys fishing, but does not do so to make money, then it is a not-for-profit activity

"Nonprofit" refers to an organization established for the purposes other than profit-making. Many people think that a "nonprofit" designation means that the organization is a charity. This is not true – many nonprofits make large amounts of money. For example, Georgetown University, a nonprofit institution is in the midst of raising \$500 million in a capital campaign. Many nonprofits like Georgetown, raise large sums of money through donations and contributions.

If a Neighborhood Networks center obtained 501(c)(3) status, the proper term, according to the IRS, would be "nonprofit."



including hiring the right staff, employing accurate accounting systems and building the business by marketing it within the local community.

A Neighborhood Networks center is very similar.

It is important to know how to start a Neighborhood Networks center, but the task can be new and exciting to a new center director. Here are some helpful hints for the first few days on the job:

# 3.2.1 Write a Neighborhood Networks Business Plan

A Neighborhood Networks business plan is how you and a board of directors operate and guide the center.

While the document is important to the day-to-day operation of the center, does the idea of creating and writing a business plan sound daunting to you?

That doesn't have to happen. Neighborhood Networks' Strategic Tracking And Reporting Tool (START) is an online business planning tool that centers can use to develop a business plan.

Since the document is created and stored online, it is easy to update so that it can provide an accurate and timely picture of center operations.

By utilizing the START tool in conjunction with this manual, your center will develop the following elements of a business plan:

**Executive Summary and Statement of Purpose** 

Organizational Management (Governance, Accounting and Staffing)
Program Planning
Marketing and Outroach

■ Marketing and Outreach

☐ Budgeting, Planning and Fundraising

☐ Program Evaluation

Overall Organizational Assessment

Access START today by visiting the Neighborhood Networks Web page and clicking on *Business Plan Resources* on the left-hand tool bar.

START is vital to the center – it is important to center sustainability because funds, partners and other community stakeholders may ask to see it to determine whether they want to support the center.

A business plan is the first marketing and planning document for any Neighborhood Networks center.

# Charting the Course: Online Tool Makes Business Planning Easy!

Neighborhood Networks' Strategic Tracking and Reporting Tool (START) is an online business planning tool that centers can use to develop a business plan.

Since the document is created and stored online, it is easy to update so that it can provide an accurate and timely picture of center operations.

By utilizing the START tool in conjunction with this manual, your center will develop the following elements of a business plan:

- ☐ Executive Summary and Statement of Purpose
- Organizational Management (Governance, Accounting and Staffing)
- ☐ Program Planning
- ☐ Marketing and Outreach
- Budgeting, Planning and Fundraising
- ☐ Program Evaluation
- Overall Organizational Assessment

Access START today by visiting the Neighborhood Networks Web page and clicking on Business Plan Resources on the left-hand tool bar.



	usiness plan is a written document that:  Describes the center's goals  Identifies where the center is and where it wants to be tomorrow  Defines the steps that help a center achieve its goals
durir cont For a	Neighborhood Networks centers, a business plan should guide the staffing the lifetime of the center. It serves as a blueprint for the center and rains the tools the staff needs to analyze the center and implement changes. a business plan to be of value to a Neighborhood Networks center, it is ential to keep it current.
requ	center is planning to seek financing, potential lenders or investors may lire a business plan. This document is crucial, therefore, in establishing the ter as a small business in the community set to serve residents.
	effective business plan is: A forward thinking strategy A roadmap for the next several years Revised, as appropriate Revisited regularly
The	first step towards creating a Neighborhood Networks business plan is to

write a mission statement. A mission statement tells and explains what the center does, whom it serves and why it exists. (See the side bar entitled "Writing Great Mission Statements.")

## 3.2.2 Neighborhood Networks Approval

After you complete a draft business plan using START, a HUD Neighborhood Networks coordinator will review and approve the plan. This process is completed through START. You business plan will be forwarded to the appropriate Neighborhood Networks coordinator for review. A listing of Neighborhood Networks Coordinators can be found in Section 2 of this Manual under Resources.

# 3.2.3 Setting Up Shop

You've got the plan, you've got the approval and the enthusiasm; you're ready, right? Not yet – a few more things need to be considered:

# 3.2.3.1 Staffing Your Center

One of the most important aspects of any Neighborhood Networks center is the quality of its staff. Courteous, resourceful and reliable staff members are essential to making the center a place where residents feel comfortable and accepted.

# **Writing Great Mission Statements**

The best way to start writing a mission statement is to brainstorm ideas of why your center exists. For this activity, take the time to write down five to 10 ideas of how your center will help your residents.

These can be ideas like:

- ☐ Improve the general welfare of the community
- ☐ Help residents find jobs
- ☐ Increase the computer literacy among residents, etc.

After you have brainstormed on the many potential missions of your center, combine the most important thoughts. This will serve as your mission statement – your goals and objectives for serving the community around your center.

Here is a sample mission statements prepared by the Federation Gardens Neighborhood Networks Center, in Miami, Fla.:

To open the world of computers and internet technology to our senior resident population and to help bridge the digital divide that separates lower income groups of Americans from their more affluent peers. The center's focus will be on senior issues including to give seniors an opportunity to stay in better contact with their families, become more aware of their options regarding transportation health care, nutrition, educational and job opportunities, senior law, and other aging in place concepts.



As a center planner, you are tasked with officially opening the center and making it successful. Although this is a fulltime and exciting task, it may be helpful to recruit and hire staff who can assist you with your daily duties. If your budget is tight, consider using volunteers.

If you are looking for staff members or volunteers, keep these essential qualities in mind:

- ☐ Interpersonal skills are often more important than technical ability. Technical skills can be learned or volunteered, but instilling confidence in residents is a skill that is needed, too.
- ☐ Flexibility is necessary for staff members who might be working with residents from toddlers to the elderly. Also, a staff member may be assigned to complete a variety of activities, such as program development and class instruction.
- ☐ Care and concern should be demonstrated at all times by staff members. It helps if staff members relate to the residents and speak the predominant language spoken at the center.

#### 3.2.3.2 Paid Staff

As a center staff member, you know the variety and multitude of tasks that you complete on a daily basis. By hiring a staff member, you may be able to focus on the long-term development goals of the center. Paid staff receive a paycheck from the center because they are capable of performing higher-level tasks.

Here are some suggestions for tasks that can be performed by center staff:

- Administrative: Program administration; liaison between the center and the property manager; fiscal accountability
- ☐ Communications outreach and development: Community relations, public and media relations and researching grant proposals
- ☐ Direct services: Educational activities, class teaching, job or career counseling and center scheduling
- ☐ Facilities and equipment maintenance: Site management, housekeeping, technical support and troubleshooting.
- ☐ Clerical and support services: Writing publications, sorting and routing mail, maintaining inventories and record keeping.

#### 3.2.3.3 Volunteer Staff

Volunteers provide some of the best staffing options for Neighborhood Networks centers — they work hard and do not require any pay or benefits. Sometimes, volunteers can be more committed to a center than staff because they demonstrate their commitment by working for free.

# Writing a job description

A Neighborhood Networks center can benefit from the work of paid staff and volunteers, but recruiting great staff members can be a challenge. One way to give an honest assessment of what the work at your center entails is to write a job description. This should include:

- ☐ A brief description of the center and its mission
- A description of the position, including title and supervising authority
- Duties and responsibilities
- Qualifications
- ☐ Salary and benefits
- ☐ Application deadline
- ☐ Request for references

With an accurate job description, you will be able to recruit knowledgeable and dedicated staff



While many people are natural volunteers, you won't find a large team that's motivated unless you can also tap their personal interests. If people are interested in bridging the digital divide, talk to those most affected by it. If people are concerned about better housing, talk with disgruntled residents. You can turn their energy into positive energy by discussing concerns and possible solutions.

	Actors influence whether volunteers will support your cause: Family responsibilities Professional interests Age, race, gender and sexual orientation Religious beliefs Income level	
regular commit	basis. To ensure a good set of volunteers, make sure they sign a ment agreement prior to starting. Volunteers could:  Help with special projects, such as a food drive or health fair  Provide short-term technical assistance, such as filing the center's 501(c)(3) application, computer troubleshooting or assist with accounting procedures  Teach a class at the center or provide job training.	
3.2.3.4	Recruiting Strategies	
is impo	er or not you choose to hire a staff member or ask for volunteers, it rtant to keep several recruiting strategies in mind:	
	Know your audience. Think about their multidimensional qualities and then focus on the aspects of your center or program that will "speak" to them.	
	Be prepared. Know your center and be prepared to answer questions that you might not think to ask. No one wants to work for an organization that is not committed to the work it does.	Need Staffing Advice?
		Neighborhood Networks offers a great guide to help
	Listen to people. If staff members and volunteers say they would love to come and work at the center but cannot afford bus fare, see if the local	centers with staff development. This guide is
	bus company will donate a few tokens per month. If they need childcare, try to arrange it for them. Listen to their needs and respond accordingly.	available on the Neighborhood Networks Web
	Offer diversity. If you have many ways for someone to get involved, chances are the person you are recruiting will find something that strikes	site at: http://www.neighborhoodnet works.org.
	their fancy. The trick is to provide people with lots of opportunities so they can fit in where they feel comfortable. Some people just want to	<b>U</b>



answer phones and stuff envelopes. Others will be more excited about being an ombudsman for the center and speaking publicly about it.

# 3.2.3.5 Caring for Volunteers

To make sure that new staff remain motivated, make sure your center has one person who handles personnel issues. He or she should: ☐ Create a job description. This will help staff and volunteers know their roles ☐ Establish a regular staff and volunteer schedule and timesheet to track hours and duties. ☐ Get to know each staff member and volunteer by first name ☐ Find ways to include staff in important decisions ■ Recruit new volunteers ☐ Use incentives for people to work at your center, such as discounted services from partners, college or high school credit, etc. ☐ Develop a means of acknowledging the staff's efforts. One smart way to demonstrate appreciation for those who work at the center is to hold periodic events, such as picnics or parties. Present staff with certificates or gifts, and you will be cementing a relationship that will benefit your center for years to come.

# 3.2.3.6 Firing Volunteers

If you have ever had to fire a volunteer you know it is one of the hardest things to do. Firing an employee is not fun, but it can be easier than telling a volunteer their service is no longer needed.

Why fire a volunteer? Presumably, volunteers are filling an important role. If a job isn't getting done correctly or if the volunteer is disrupting center operation, you have a responsibility to take corrective action.

This is why having a volunteer coordinator draft a volunteer job description is crucial. Make sure to incorporate stipulations for becoming and remaining a volunteer. Use phrases like "arrive on time," "adopt a positive attitude" and "maintain a high level of commitment to the organization." This language can be helpful when discussing job performance with a volunteer and its impact on center operation.



Ne	ighborhood Networks Staffing Advice
	equeline Jones, director of social services at Interstate Realty Management Company, Philadelphia, Pa., which erates Neighborhood Networks centers in several states, makes these recommendations:
	<b>Develop a clear idea of what role you are recruiting for.</b> Smart growth for your center requires balancing the type of staff your center needs and your budget.
	Identify the qualifications and skills that are required to fill your position and include them in the job announcement. Centers often need staff with both strong technical skills and interpersonal/motivational skills.
	<b>Know where to recruit.</b> Recruit in places that will provide the best candidates. Colleges, universities, and technical schools are good places to find applicants. Many centers have hired their own graduates to teach or otherwise assist in the center.
	<b>Develop consistent recruitment policies.</b> Before interviewing any candidates, develop a plan for assessing their qualifications. Assign point values to the different skills or experience you are seeking, and rate your interviewees accordingly. This will help you to initially screen candidates. Allow other staff members to meet the candidates and consider their impressions and opinions. Finally, be sure that the candidate's interests are compatible with your center's mission and goals.
	Leverage your resources. While it is always preferable for both control and consistency to hire paid instructors, if this is not within your budget, make the most of other resources. Tap into dependable sources of volunteers, such as Eagle Scouts, high school and college students seeking internships, and the volunteer center in your community.

# 3.2.3.7 Bookkeeping and accounting

Do you need help with money management in the center? Do you understand the fundamentals of bookkeeping? What about filing all of the tax-exempt forms?

Money management terms can be confusing. Accounts payable. Account receivable. Balance sheets. Budgets. Much of this information can be confusing and complicated and requires some basic accounting knowledge. (see sidebar entitled "Basic Accounting Terms in Plain English")



# **Basic Accounting Terms in Plain English**

Neighborhood Networks Means Business!

Running a Neighborhood Networks center is not so different from running a business. Just like a business, a center delivers its products (programs and services) to clients (residents) within a sustainable financial framework.

Here are a few business and accounting concepts that center staff might find useful:

**Assets** are economic resources that are expected to produce future benefits. Think of ways your center's resources can generate income. For example, Oasis Neighborhood Networks Center, Fort Worth, Texas, rents its space for meetings, banquets and community gatherings. Computers and software are assets, too. Communities On-Line Center, Baltimore, Md., charges a fee for computer class enrollment.

**Bookkeeping** is the recording of a center's financial transactions. Knowing detailed information on center spending, income and finances enables center staff to make smart management decisions. Start a journal, a notebook or computer spreadsheet, to record each time your center spends or receives money. Be sure to note the reason for the transaction, whether it is purchasing new computers or collecting earnings from a bake sale.

**Costs** can be classified as **controllable**, such as art supplies or printer paper, or **uncontrollable**, such as rent or taxes. List the center's costs and designate which are controllable. Then brainstorm ways to decrease those costs. Would turning off the center's computers each night decrease the electricity bill?

**Customer orientation** is the philosophy that the customer is king. Successful businesses make a top priority of giving customers what they want and need. Neighborhood Networks centers should regularly evaluate the needs of their users through surveys and informal conversations to ensure that the center is offering the appropriate programs and services. Often, customer-driven solutions can be as simple as changing the center's hours of operation to match residents' schedules.

**Group purchasing discounts** are sometimes offered to groups of organizations that purchase supplies together. Consider teaming with other community technology centers or organizations in your neighborhood to approach an office supply store about a group rate.

**Interest** is the rate of at which money grows in value if placed in a bank account or other investment. Keep most or all of the center's cash in the bank until it is time to make a purchase. Because of inflation, money not left in a bank account decreases in value.

**Money market accounts** are special bank accounts that offer slightly higher interest rates because the bank invests the money.

**Certificates of deposit (CDs)** also offer high interest rates to individuals who pledge not to withdraw their money until the CD expires. CDs are usually available for periods ranging from three months to several years and can be for varying amounts.



Another important tool for a center is a budget. Managing incoming and outgoing money is often very difficult and time consuming. To help, the START tool provides a budget template. This fill-in-the-blank form can be completed with little time and effort and makes the budgeting process much easier.

Finally, as mentioned previously in this section, a center can be for profit or nonprofit, but it is essential that a center director have knowledge of the tax status of the organization.

Once these financial steps are complete, a Neighborhood Networks center can be off and running.



# **Section 4: Asset Mapping and Fund Development**

Section 4 will show center planners how to identify potential resources in the surrounding community through an asset map of the community. The asset mapping approach is an alternative to a traditional needs assessment. Rather than focusing on the needs of the community, asset mapping identifies the community's assets, such as schools, libraries, community colleges, small businesses, and other the assets of individuals, including residents. Based on the asset mapping process, center planners can begin to build relationships with these community members, a process that is described more fully in Section 7.

The next segment covers basic budgeting, a critical step in center planning. The tools and information presented here will help planners think through all aspects of budgeting to start up a center and for ongoing operations.

The final segment in this section describes fundraising and the components of a successful proposal, such as the statement of need, the proposal narrative, the budget, the evaluation component, and the timeline.

# 4.1 Asset Mapping

One of the earliest steps that Neighborhood Networks center organizers should complete is an asset map of the surrounding community's resources. These resources are provided by companies and organizations in your community and might be available for your center.

This is necessary so that a center does not duplicate services already existing in a community. A Neighborhood Networks center can create new programs or services or develop ones that complement those that are offered elsewhere.

Most importantly, through asset mapping and understanding the community it serves, a Neighborhood Networks center can carve its own niche. Residents will soon depend on and enjoy the services the center provides.

Since the Neighborhood Networks center will serve the community, center planners will need information about the resident population, as well as the community programs and resources. When a center may be expanding existing service programs in the community, demographics

# "There are no dumb questions..."

Remember when your schoolteacher would say, "There are no dumb questions" when she was introducing something new? Well, asset mapping is related to this.

List every organization, agency, store, and business that you can think of that is near your center. Just as there are no dumb questions, there are no institutions that are out of the reach of a Neighborhood Networks center.

Have confidence within your own community.



and interests may be known, but identifying relevant community resources and potential partnerships is still a worthwhile endeavor.

# 4.1.1 Designing an Asset Mapping System

An important question that center planners should ask is, "Who will participate in the center and what are their interests?"

Usually, communities consist of people of different ages, races and culture so there is no one program or activity that will fit all residents at every center so general information about the community is important so that center planners can make sensible choices regarding:

Space requirements for the Neighborhood Networks center
Hardware and software
Types of workshops or classes to offered
Multilingual capacity of center staff
Scheduling to maximize center usage
Numbers and types of teachers and volunteers needed

It will also be important to ascertain community interest and perceived need among residents for education programs, job skills development, after school activities, children's' programs, recreation, elder services and business interests (such as learning accounting or financing skills).

# 4.1.2 Finding Asset Mapping Information

There are many ways to access information on the residents of your community so you will understand how to approach the process of asset mapping. Neighborhood Networks centers have many avenues available to them and most are free to the public. Consider these references:

•	ppgg are
the	m and most are free to the public. Consider these references:
	US Census Bureau
	Board members or staff may have the knowledge or access to past
	surveys conducted by municipal or civic organizations that may
	complement or enhance Census data.
	Local government representatives may have access to data gathered
	local agencies.
	Neighborhood/resident meetings focus groups of community resident

■ Neighborhood/resident meetings, focus groups of community residents who share common interests (e.g. seniors, business owners, unemployed residents, PTA members, tenant groups, etc.) may have more personalized data.

After exploring these sources, if your center still lacks the information that you feel you need, then consider creating a community survey.

Surveys oftentimes are very difficult to administer because most residents

# Making the Most Out of Census Data

Census data is very informative and thorough, and provide an accurate description of your community. See the Census Bureau's Web site at http://www.census.gov. The data can be used to obtain such information as:

☐ Size and density of targeted population;

by

- □ Breakdown of population by age, sex, ethnicity, language of choice, and education
- Proportion of employed to unemployed, average income and predominant types of employment or occupation.



are busy and do not have time to complete a survey. It may be more beneficial to give a more detailed survey when residents start coming to the center. When a resident becomes a regular center user, he or she may be more willing to respond to questions regarding interests, needs and potential contributions, than the broader resident community.

What if worse comes to worse and sufficient data is not available? Then speak to four to five of the most active residents at the property. By asking them to share their knowledge of other residents, you will build trust within the community and come away from the discussion with a good idea of what residents want from the center. Also, if a positive, outspoken resident suggests a use for the center, the chances are great that they will use the center and bring other residents with them.

# 4.2 Identifying Local Institutional Resources

It is essential to create an inventory that will assist center planners in developing programs and partnerships. By identifying and compiling a list of resources, a center can "asset map" the community that it serves, thereby becoming more efficient and effective in its delivery of services.

Here is a three-step process that a center can undertake to perform an effective asset map:

# Step 1: List all community institutions

Public and private schools: including preschools, elementary, middle and high schools, and vocational/technical schools. School board members and key administrative staff, such as the computer coordinator.
Post-secondary school: technical, junior and community colleges, universities or extension services that may be located nearby.
Fraternities, sororities or outreach programs associated with colleges and universities
Libraries, museums and research institutions
Other housing properties, including the property where the center is located
Local business organizations. Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, Veterans of Foreign Wars, professional women's organizations and unions
Major manufacturers or business centers in or near your center. Restaurants, travel agencies, Internet companies, police and fire departments, data services, temporary employment agencies,

# Sometimes the Best Resources are the Closest

Most properties have many resources within their walls. Sometimes, it is not necessary to ask anyone but residents for assistance. Think about these questions, and others, in relation to your residents:

- ☐ Is there a plumber who might fix a leaking pipe or an electrician who might wire the center?
- Are there people who have specific skill areas, such as computer technology, who can be volunteers?
- □ Are there unemployed, seniors residents or others who would contribute clerical services or childcare?
- What other skills are available to the startup and ongoing operations of the center?

bakeries, franchises, department stores and grocery stores



	Networks
<ul> <li>Job training centers. Local Workforce Investment Boards and job centers.</li> <li>Religious institutions and special interest groups. Churches, temples and mosques.</li> <li>Community-based organizations. Hospitals. YMCAs, YWCAs, 4-H and Boys and Girls clubs, seniors centers, credit unions and banks, clinics, shelters, community action agencies, community development organizations, literacy programs, cultural or ethnic clubs or associations and art councils.</li> <li>Press and media. Local newspapers, radio and television, Internet news pages, cable access stations and magazines.</li> <li>Local or regional telecommunication providers</li> </ul>	
Neighborhood Networks staff, property owners and managers and residents can brainstorm about other institutions that can be added to the list. The list will represent all organizations, businesses and service providers in your community.	
Step 2: List the Needed Neighborhood Networks Center Resources	
Because each center is different, so are the resources needed to effectively serve residents. Create a list of everything that your center may need. The list may look something like this:  Space and facilities where the center is to be located Property renovation: including plumbing, wiring, painting, etc. Equipment: hardware, software, furniture, furnishings People: staff and volunteers, people with expertise in computer technology, maintenance, accounting, evaluation, etc. Programs and resources, including distance learning and courses available through telecommunications Complementary programs: adult literacy, after school, job training/placement, recreational, elder services, Head Start, Fair Start, etc. Jobs for participants who acquire new skills at the center Economic capability and group purchasing: buying in bulk, sharing educational software licenses, free Internet accounts, etc.	Resources Available through Neighborhood Networks  The national Neighborhood Networks initiative offers centers many resources to help with asset mapping, funding, communications, partnership and program development, and technical assistance.  Check out the Neighborhood Networks Web site at <a href="http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org">http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org</a> or call in Information Hotline at (888) 312-2743.
<ul><li>Publicity and promotion of the center</li><li>Money: cash and in-kind donations (which can sometimes be as</li></ul>	

Make sure that Neighborhood Networks center stakeholders think of as many assets as possible during this process.

# Step 3: Determining Need and Accessibility

good as money!).



After completing both lists, it is best to construct a database of all the community contact information and current resources and needs of the center. By comparing the two, it is possible to see what the Neighborhood Networks center has to offer the community -- and what the community has to offer the center

Once you have completed the asset map, make sure it is accessible. Update the map as new resources become available.

# 4.3 Neighborhood Networks Budget

Creating a budget is one of the first projects a center should undertake once the asset mapping is completed. It is time to evaluate the results of the asset mapping and implement the programs and resources necessary to make the center successful.

The Neighborhood Networks Strategic Tracking And Reporting Tool (START) is designed to help a center focus on calculating the cost to start a center and develop an operating budget for the first three years.

After finishing Section 6 of the START tool online, center staff will have:

Developed expense budgets for the center's start up and
operation for years 1, 2 and 3
Reviewed potential sources of funding and built a reserve budget
for the center's start up and operation for years 1, 2 and 3

☐ Developed goals, activities and outcomes for a fundraising plan for the center

## **Budgeting for the Center**

There are two types of budgets: start up and operating. Both are essential, yet different aspects of starting a Neighborhood Networks center.

## **Start Up Budget:**

A start up budget details the onetime costs of setting up the center and the sources of funds to cover these costs.

Capital expenses and onetime expenditures, such as renovations to the space, purchase of office equipment and furniture, and utility company deposits, such as electric, heat, phone, etc.

## **Operating Budget**

An operating budget details the ongoing costs of operating the center and the likely sources of funds that will be used to meet those costs

Expenses that will continue for the life of the center, such as salaries and benefits, professional fees, space and utilities, equipment maintenance and replacement, software and computer supplies, promotion and outreach expenses, telecommunications costs, educational materials, and miscellaneous others.



# 4.3.1 Budget Expense Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to help center planners think about the costs the center might incur. Not every category will apply to every center. Please use the ones that are best suited for your individual situation. For large items, such as equipment, it would be wise to obtain local bids before finalizing the budget.

Expenses	Start up	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Center Staffing		1	•	•
Staff 1				
Staff 2				
Staff 3				
Staff 4				
Staff 5				
Staff training				
Subtotal – Center staffing				
<u> </u>		1	•	•
Space needs and utilization				
Rent				
Heat, ventilation, air conditioning				
Partition walls				
Installation of closets/secure				
space				
Expansion of power capacity				
Installation of electrical outlets				
Installation of overhead lights				
Other				
Subtotal – Space needs and				
utilization				
Security				
Deadbolts, locks for windows				
Locks and cables to secure				
equipment to tables				
Locks to secure filing cabinets				
Locks to secure closets				
Engraving pen to identify				
equipment				
Alarm				
Installation of alarm				
Security cameras				
Installation of security cameras				
Security guard				
Subtotal – security				
Equipment and hardware	1	<u>†</u>	<del> </del>	
Computers (including monitor,				
keyboard, mouse, etc.)				
Printer				
Internet connection – modem,				
DSL, etc. Computer cable				
•				
Computer wires				
Extension cords				
Surge protectors				



Expenses	Start up	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Network wiring/hubs	*	*	<u>, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , </u>	,
Router				
Additional warranties				
Service contract				
Networking hardware				
Telephones				
Telephone installation				
Photocopier				
Fax machine				
Other				
Subtotal – Hardware				
Subtotal – Haruware				
Standard auftware programs				
Standard software programs			1	
Word processing				
Spreadsheets				
Graphics				
Databases				
Anti-virus program				
Networking operating				
Other				
Subtotal – Software				
Furniture				
Computer tables				
Sign-in table				
Work tables, desk				
Chairs for desks, computers,				
tables, etc.				
Lighting				
Bulletin boards				
Coat racks				
Filing cabinets				
Anti-static floor covering				
Carpet				
Center sign				
Other				
Subtotal – Furniture				
		II.	<u> </u>	II.
Program costs and materials				
Adult education				
After-school activities				
Job training	+			
Services for Seniors				
Other				
Subtotal – Program materials	+			
Subtotal – i Togram materials	1		<u> </u>	
Office supplies				
Paper Paper				
Pens, pencils, crayons, markers				
	+			
Printer toner				
First-Aid kit				
Soap				
Paper towels				
Other				
Subtotal – Office supplies				
Other expenses				



Expenses	Start up	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Subtotal – Other expenses				
TOTAL				

# 4.3.2 Budget Forecasting

A Neighborhood Networks center receiving federal funds or applying for 501(c)(3) status is often required to conduct budget forecasts up to three years in advance.

Here are ideas for predicting future budgets:

Make an assessment of your center's priorities to forecast how much
support you will need.

- ☐ If you have been in existence for several months, you might determine which of these months you feel are representative of how your organization will operate in the future. You can take that month's budget and extrapolate to the future by multiplying by twelve for a one-year budget. Remember, budget numbers, for such expenses as utilities, can be different because of seasonal fluctuation.
- Consult with organizations similar to yours (in size, demographic profile, clientele, market similarity or service provided) and project your budget accordingly.
- □ Examine significant differences between the previous fiscal year's operating budget and this year's, paying attention to how closely estimated amounts compared with actual expenditures. Determine if differences were caused by a onetime situation or by a change in routine operations.
- ☐ Contact utility companies for information on potential rate increases.
- ☐ Identify other potential revenues or expenses, such as wage increases, staff trainings, new hires, profits from center-based businesses, etc.
- Consult with key center stakeholders to identify desired additions or improvements to structure, facility upgrades, increased services in center, etc.

# 4.4 Funding the Budget

# 4.4.1 Finding Funding Sources

Finding funding sources is like being Sherlock Holmes on a detective mission. Search in the wrong place or for the wrong clue, and you can come up shorthanded. Know where to look by looking for leads in your community, and you can strike funding gold.

#### Want more information?

Neighborhood Networks offers many guides and fact sheets relating to numerous topics in this manual. Call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center at (888) 312-2743, visit the Web site or use the reference to the publication order form in Section 2 to obtain these helpful tools. Here is some suggested reading for this section:

- Neighborhood Networks Funding Guide
- Advice from the Big \$\$\$
  Winners When the Goal
  is \$10,000 or More



Here ar	e so	me clues for finding funding success:	
		ow where to start.	
		Use the reference list in Section 2 to find good Internet	
		resources and create a solid base from which you can begin.	
		It is effective to use targeted search engines on the Internet,	
		(these sites can be found in Section 2) and use the terms "philanthropy," "grants," "fundraising" and "nonprofits." This should turn up some excellent electronic leads.	Funding your center with property funds.
in (	ash ourd Mo	contributions. Businesses want to contribute to the community so it's your job to convince them that they should do so by supporting your Neighborhood Networks center.	You may apply to HUD for permission to use certain funds towards the development of your center. It requires that a few requirements are met. First, the Neighborhood Networks business plan must receive approval from HUD. Second, HUD must approve any items that receive funding, which all must be directly related to center activities.
_	ma cor Vol sta a c loc the In-l		Potentially, you can draw from the following sources:  Residual Receipts Account Owner's equity Funds borrowed from the Reserve for Replacement Account Rent increase Request a special rent adjustment
4.4.2 (	ran	t Writing	□ Excess income
applyin governi Usually Networ	g foo men , a g ks c	od Networks centers and their partners oftentimes collaborate on grants. Grants are usually offered by private foundations or tentities and provide money primarily to nonprofit organizations. Irant application process requires proof of the Neighborhood enter's track record. When considering applying for government or funding, a collaborative proposal with an established nonprofit may	The Neighborhood Networks coordinator in your area can answer questions about available HUD funding.

be the preferred route. By partnering with another organization, a Neighborhood Networks center can look more attractive to funders.



# 4.4.3 Preparing to Write the Proposal

Successful grant writing involves the coordination of several activities relating to writing a proposal and usually is performed under time constraints. Utilize the resources in Section 2 for detailed information on grant writing.

Before writing a grant, it is important to think about how you will get funders to know who you are. An essential part of fund raising is relationship building. You should design an outreach campaign as part of your fund raising strategy to increase the potential funder's awareness of your center and its activities and partners. This outreach campaign may consist of letters or telephone calls to funders introducing your center or formal meetings where you can talk with the funder face to face. Funders are more likely to fund familiar organizations and programs.

Before you write the proposal, there are a few steps to think about: ☐ Find available funders. Much of the funding process is research. Use the Internet, especially the Neighborhood Networks Web site, to identify funders online. Look for funders that have qualifications that your center meets. ☐ Obtain proposal guidelines. It is important to see grant guidelines because every potential funder has a different format, requirements and proposal process. Proposal guidelines will usually tell you about submission deadlines, eligibility criteria, proposal format, review timetable, budgets, funding priorities, evaluation process, contact information and other submission requirements. From these guidelines, you should have a clear idea of everything that is needed. It is recommended that you read the guidelines several times. This ensures that you understand the guidelines and helps you identify questions that require clarification from the funder. Review eligibility requirements. Be sure that the center or partner serves the appropriate target population, meets the funder's objectives and is within the funder's geographic boundaries. Also, determine if the funder requires 501(c)(3) status. If so, make sure the center is eligible by referring to Section 6. Oftentimes, a center is able to partner with a nonprofit organization and apply for the grant regardless of the center's status. ☐ Know the submission deadline. Plan to submit the proposal before the

deadline as emergencies can arise. Early submission allows for time to react to such potential disasters as a computer crashing or the printer not functioning. Also, make sure that you leave enough time for the funder to receive the application. Some proposals can be e-mailed, but

others must be mailed. Build in delivery time to your timeline.

Determine personnel needs. More often than not, proposals need to be submitted within a very short time frame. Make sure you have enough time and resources to complete the proposal as late submissions usually are not accepted. Also, if your center is partnering with other

#### **Action Words!**

Proposals are similar to resumes. Funders are attracted to action words that call attention to a center's activities. Here are some great examples of action words and phrases for proposals that make the center more attractive:

- Streamlined operations;
- Moved residents from welfare to work:
- Resolved conflicts;
- ☐ Shaped programs:
- Strategized operations;
- Composed Memorandums of
- UnderstandingSuccessfully budgeted.

There are many more phrases that are attractive to funders – make sure to come up with some more!



organizations on the proposal, make sure to confirm who will lead the effort. It runs much smoother if one person is in charge.

# 4.4.4 Additional Proposal Material

It is important to think ahead about additional materials supporting your grant proposal that the funder may require. Also, if you are partnering with an organization, make sure they know the requirements as well.

- ☐ These supporting materials include letters of endorsement, staff resumes and exhibit charts. The guidelines identify what is needed for each proposal.
- ☐ Proposals typically require the signatures of board members or the executive director. Again, review the proposal guidelines to determine the signatures that are needed and allow enough time to obtain them.

#### 4.4.5 Statement of Need

The first part of the proposal narrative is the statement of need. This is what funders will read first so an effective statement of need will stick with them. Many funders will only remember what was written in the beginning of the proposal, so make sure it is convincing and unforgettable. The statement should:

- Clearly and concisely describe the purpose of the project
   Focus on the funder's objectives and list your project's goals and
- Focus on the funder's objectives and list your project's goals and measurable objectives
- ☐ State why the project should be supported and provide facts and figures to support your claim
- ☐ Meet the funder's required length. Except in brief proposals, statements of need are generally one to three pages in length

# 4.4.6. Proposal Narrative

After completing the Statement of Need and describing the project and why it should be funded, you need to discuss how the center plans to implement the project. This is the section of the proposal called the narrative. Overall, the narrative should:

- Describe the method and process of accomplishing your goals and objectives
- ☐ Describe the scope of work with the expected outcomes
- Outline proposed activities

# Mathematics is Fundamental

Make sure budget numbers add up and are logical. Have someone who has not worked with the budget check your math to ensure you are presenting the most accurate information to funders.

Poor math usually equals no chance at receiving the grant.



This section of the proposal is often seen as the most difficult, but is similar to drafting a center business plan. If the center were partnering with other organizations on the grant proposal, this would be an opportune time for a brainstorming session. Either way, make sure you know the center's resources and your ability to conduct the proposed work.

#### 4.4.7 Available Resources

The proposal narrative should detail the available resources to assist you with implementing your project. What staff, partners or other funding resources do you have that will allow you to accomplish your goals? Also consider how much of a person's time would be required to implement the project as this will determine what resources are needed.

Use START for help with this section. If you have completed START, then you should already know the funding you receive and how your staff is utilized. For more information, visit the START homepage at <a href="http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org">http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org</a>.

This is also where you should identify key staff, staff roles and credentials.

#### 4.4.8 Timeline

The last part of the proposal narrative is the timeline. This is important because it shows funders your thought process and how quickly you believe you can complete certain tasks. The timeline should include:

- An outline of start and end dates
- Schedule of events
- Projected outcomes and deliverable dates
- Sub-project team leaders (if partnering with other organizations)

#### 4.4.9 Proposal Budget

The budget is the cost projection that tells how projects will be implemented and managed. Budgets should include all sources of income and expenditures for the center (as well as its partners, if applicable), including in-kind donations and matching revenue. A sample budget can be found in Section 4.

The proposal budget should be linked to the project description. Any gaps between the proposal budget and project description should be explained. Funders evaluate proposal budgets to determine if the project can be accomplished within budget, if the costs are reasonable, if the budget is



consistent with the proposed activities and if there is sufficient detail and explanation in the budget.

# 4.4.10 Project Evaluation

How will you determine if the project is a success? How will you convince your funder of success?

Building in an evaluation component into both the project and the grant proposal will help you and your funder answer these questions.

Evaluation is important because most private and public grantors require it. It is also important because it helps you prove the value of your project to existing and potential funders.

Evaluation mechanisms should be linked to the project description. You should take the evaluation to the next level --and impress your funders -- by providing them with the results of the service you provided and the long-term impact of the project.

# 4.4.11 Sending It Off and Following It Up

Once you submit the proposal, make sure that it arrives at its destination on time. For e-mail submissions, select the return receipt option; for mail submissions, track the package via the Internet, via the carrier or by telephone via the shipping company.

After you have successfully submitted the proposal, your work is not done yet. Be sure to contact the funder to find out about the status, evaluation or outcome. Request feedback from the funder about the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, if this information is available. Inquire about official proposal debriefings offered by government funders. Remember to send a thank you letter or call the funder if your proposal is funded.

Also, it is important to keep funders involved with center activities to increase chances of future funding. It is very important to recognize funders as partners and maintain the relationships established with them.

# **Grant Writing Tips**

Don Druker, program officer with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, provided a view of the granting process from the funder's perspective in a 2001 Neighborhood Networks teleconference.

As a reviewer of grant applications, Druker explained how funders look to measure outcomes to justify their investment in a grantee.

"The grant goes to fund real problems, innovative projects that will maximize community involvement, deal with disparity and result in a positive outcome," Druker said. "We try to maintain a focus on the outcome. The statement of a problem, technical solution and measurable outcomes are the three determining factors in assessing the grant application."



## **Section 5: Program Development**

Program development is the core of a center's successful operation and sustainability. Provide programs and services that are relevant to center users and center users will keep on returning to the center, funders will continue funding programs (and even expand their commitments), volunteers will flock to the center, and partners will readily step up to the plate with additional donations and resources.

Section 5 describes some of the programs commonly offered through Neighborhood Networks centers and offers guidance about how to determine the priorities and interests of residents. It also provides practical tips about commonly offered programs.

This section also describes communications strategies center organizers can use to inform target audiences within their community about their programs and successes. These include newsletters and other general public awareness strategies, such as media outreach, outreach to local officials, and public meetings.

### 5.1 Likely Neighborhood Networks Programs

All Neighborhood Networks centers are different but there is a common thread among them – all centers strive to meet the needs of children, adults and seniors by providing relevant programs and services. Programs and services offered by centers include:

Computer access and training
Job skills
Pre-school and after school activities
Adult education
Elder services
Basic computer skill classes: Internet, email, word processing, etc.
Career development and job preparation
Job placement
Electronic publishing
Electronic commerce and micro-enterprise development

Neighborhood Networks centers have become successful by developing programs with a technology focus. It is important to stress to your residents, that while a center provides computers and technology training, another center goal is to develop a sense of community. Programs like childcare, health care awareness, drug and alcohol prevention programs, and religious-based meetings all have a home within the center.

#### Want more information?

Neighborhood Networks offers many guides and fact sheets relating to numerous topics in this manual. Call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center at (888) 312-2743, visit the Web site or use the reference to the publication order form in Section 2 to obtain these helpful tools. Here is some suggested reading for this section:

- Neighborhood Networks Centers Link Residents to Health Information and Services
- The Web: A Source of Health Information for Seniors
- Neighborhood Networks Guide to Information, Training and Technical Assistance Providers
- Funding Educational Programs
- Youth Education Programs
- Engaging Adults in Literacy Programs
- Creating Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Youth
- Engaging Education: Integrating Work, Technology and Learning for Adults
- Helping Residents Succeed on the Job: How to Design and Deliver an Effective Job Retention Program
- Helping Residents Achieve Self-Sufficiency: How to Design and Deliver Career Growth and Advancement Assistance
- How Neighborhood Networks Centers Can Support Microenterprises
- How to Design and Deliver an Effective "Outsourcing" Program. Creating New Businesses and Jobs for Residents



This manual primarily focuses on the technology-driven programs and more resources to assist a center planner in non-technology-based programs is available in Section 2 and by calling the Neighborhood Networks hotline at (888) 312-2743.

## 5.2 Selecting Programs

In Section 4, you surveyed the community and discovered that there are many program and partnership options. With this information in hand, you may have an idea of which programs would make sense for your center to offer. The most vital information, however, comes directly from your residents. The Neighborhood Networks Strategic Tracking And Reporting Tool (START) assists center planners in conducting this survey.

#### 5.2.1 Resident Survey

A survey of residents should be easy and straightforward. The survey will accomplish two goals. It will help you identify the programs that will be valuable to residents and attract residents to the programs and services the center offers. By establishing programs that are of interest to residents, the center will improve its utilization and obtain programmatic goals.

As a center planner, it is important to keep a few things in mind when planning a survey:

- ☐ Conducting the survey: Make sure that you know exactly the information you would like to obtain from the survey. It is recommended that residents be surveyed annually so it is important that the survey contain the best questions possible.
- □ Preparing and scheduling residents for the survey: Let residents know a survey will be conducted. Do not surprise them with it and make sure it is conducted when residents have time to participate. Holidays and school recess or vacations can be inconvenient times for residents to participate.
- ☐ **Maintaining confidentiality:** Many residents are wary of surveys. Unless it is absolutely necessary, do not ask for their name, apartment number or other distinguishing characteristics.
- ☐ Collecting and reviewing completed survey: Do set deadlines. Insure that residents return the survey to you in a timely fashion.
- □ Determining the adequacy of the response rate: Determine if enough residents completed the survey to provide an adequate picture of center operations. One way to entice residents to complete the survey is to offer an incentive. Some centers, such as the Villages of Marley Station Neighborhood Networks Center in Glen Burnie, Md., partnered with a local grocery store and gave

## START's Demographic Reports

START is the online business plan tool developed by Neighborhood Networks in 2000 to help centers identify center users, partners and programs, maintain current records about them and assess their value. This page, http://www.neighborhoodnet works.org, assists you in learning about the make-up of centers' residents and developing successful programs.

Remember: START not only helps calculate center demographics, it stores the information as part of the center's business plan.



residents \$5 gift certificates toward the purchase of groceries for completing the survey.

#### 5.2.1.1 Demographic Survey

The first step in learning more about the residents who use your Neighborhood Networks center is to obtain information about them. START has a Demographic Reporting Form that can be useful. This allows a center planner to enter in the number of residents and such characteristics as race, gender and education level. By simply entering numbers, the START tool calculates, records and maintains the accurate demographic makeup of the center. This step will help center planners select programs and services that are appropriate for the residents the center serves.

#### 5.2.1.2 Program Survey

After you have completed the demographic portion of the survey, it is important to ask the residents about their interests. The residents determine the program focus, so make sure you understand what will help them achieve their goals, whether it is getting a job or education, or helping children be academic achievers.

It is possible to use START for this task. The following page is an example of the "Resident Survey" that can be found on START. Go to http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org. Once residents identify programs that would be of interest to them, collect the responses and tally the results. Record the total number of residents who responded to the survey and the total number of marks for each survey item. Enter them into START to find out how important these programs are.

The START tool will calculate the level of overall interest. This will allow you to gauge which programs will be the most successful.

Access START by visiting the Neighborhood Networks Web page and clicking on *Business Plan Resources* on the left-hand tool bar.



#### START is Not the End

START is a general business plan tool meant for all Neighborhood Networks centers, regardless of size or amount of activity. It may seem that it does not ask the appropriate questions or does not provide the answers that are most needed. That is why it is crucial to develop your own questions for your residents. Here are some questions that START does not cover that may be important for your center:

- ☐ What times would you most likely use the center: mornings, afternoons, evenings, weekends? This question is vital for a center director. Some centers have to open early in the morning to accommodate residents who wish to use the computers before work or school. Other centers remain open late at night for residents returning from work. Some residents only have free time on the weekends. Determine which times are best for most residents and plan programming around them.
- □ Do you learn better on your own or from another person? Some people excel in the classroom environment, some learn better at their own pace. Find out which is true for your residents and make programs available in both formats, if possible.
- Do you or your children have access to computers at work or school? For many residents, the computer at the Neighborhood Networks center is the only computer available to them. This information is vital because it can determine one's computer aptitude. It can help you decide whether a basic computer class is necessary.

Any question directed at residents with the intention of making the center more usable for them is never a bad question. Center planners do not have to be limited to the questions contained in START.

## 5.3 Program Planning

Now you have determined residents' interest, it is time to develop appropriate programs.

Look at the results of the Program Survey completed through START. How did the results rank resident interest for each program activity?

Here are a few questions to ask yourself regarding the results:

- ☐ What programs did the center intend to offer?
- ☐ How do these programs compare with what residents want?
- ☐ Have the residents identified any programs that you are not prepared to offer?

While establishing an initial focus for the Neighborhood Networks center and engaging in preliminary program planning are essential steps, the results must not be regarded as set in stone. It is more than likely that the center's focus areas may change or broaden as the center matures. It is also important to realize that it may not be possible to accommodate every need and interest in the time that you wish. Leave room for constructive response once usage patterns emerge and active participant needs can be identified.



Here are some examples of programs that have proven successful at Neighborhood Networks centers across the country and important considerations for each of them:

#### 5.3.1 Public Access and/or Open Lab Time

Most centers will want to include some public access or open lab time. This can be essential in marketing the specific programs to residents.

- ☐ Public access offers members of the community the opportunity to use computer and communications technologies to explore their own interests, develop skills and discover what computer technology can do.
- Open lab time provides those involved in structured classes with opportunities to practice their new skills or explore new ones.
- Some centers ask for a voluntary contribution of \$1-\$2 from participants to use an open lab. This modest fee can help defray operational costs, such as printer paper, diskettes and other center supplies.

Although open lab time is an essential part of any Neighborhood Networks center and does not require much in terms of program planning, it is important to keep in mind a few suggestions:

- ☐ It may be necessary to designate times specifically for children and other times for teens and adults.
- ☐ It is important to schedule times during the day and evening, according to resident survey responses.
- ☐ It is advisable to have introductory (or basic) programs for the most popular software. Remember that popularity shifts frequently so what is appropriate today can be obsolete tomorrow.
- ☐ This will normally be a heavy usage time. It is advisable to have a high concentration of staff or volunteers present to provide assistance and even serve as traffic managers so everyone has the computer access they need.
- ☐ If public access is to include Internet access, more than one phone line or high-capacity access line may be needed. Special rules limiting one person's access time may need to be implemented.

### 5.3.2 Pre-school and Family Programs

Many centers have a high percentage of young children. Pre-school and family programs help build the sense of community essential to any center:

Times when parents can bring young children and work together with them to explore appropriate software, such as drawing, animation and learning games.

## Program Planning Paranoia

Planning programs for residents can be stressful. Some residents want some things, and some residents want others. Do not try to please everyone at the same time – this will cause undue stress on you and the residents. It is better to establish a handful of strong programs than to create a jumble of programs that never fully serve the residents.

Remember the words of our 16th President:

"You can please some of the people all of the time. You can please all of the people some of the time. But you can't please all of the people all of the time."

-- Abraham Lincoln



	Opportunity to partner with a local Even Start, Head Start or day care program that may not have access to computers.		
childrer	are many important issues to consider about programs for young and families:  The attention span of young children is limited, so sessions should be short — a half-hour or 45 minutes, at most.  Young children may not be able to reach the mouse or keyboard comfortably from ordinary chair height. If you don't have adjustable chairs, stock booster seats or plenty of telephone books or similar items.  Parents may need prior guidance in using the software to enable them to work efficiently with their children. Plan an introductory		
5.3.3 A	session solely with the parents.  After-school Activities		
Many centers offer children the opportunity to come to the center after school by offering educational programs especially for them. Children see these programs as fun and exciting times away from the classroom. The secret is that while most children don't think they are doing school-related activities, they are gaining skills that will prove worthwhile in the future.			
	children will enjoy:  Subject-area activities. Commercial software that offers homework help, tutorials and other activities covering such subjects as reading, writing, math and sciences. See Section 2 for commercial software sites available to centers.		
	Games. Games can be effective tools for getting children interested in learning more about computer technology. Be wary of games,		
	though. Too many espouse violence or are otherwise inappropriate. <i>Exploring the Internet.</i> Once children are equipped with basic computer skills, they may wish to test and improve their skills on the World Wide Web. This can be a research tool, communication		
	method or skill-building program.  Multimedia publishing. Children may become quickly skilled in designing Web pages, constructing family or neighborhood profiles and creating programs for school.		
Allowing	a children to use the Neighborhood Networks center oftentimes		

Allowing children to use the Neighborhood Networks center oftentimes requires much patience and understanding. Many times, parents use the center as childcare. It is up to you to limit those types of activities at your discretion.

Here are other considerations when developing programs for children:



Know every child. Enforce sign-in and sign-out procedures. Be
sure you can notify an appropriate person if special circumstances
arise.
Make sure children know the rules of the center.
Young people working alone need frequent attention. To facilitate
peer tutoring and collaborative leadership, encourage two or more
children to work together at a single computer.
Kids need space, not just to use the computer, but to stow such
items as their book bag and coat.

#### **Young Adult Success Stories**

Oftentimes, center directors create unique and enjoyable programs that receive media attention. This article, from the Neighborhood Networks Web site, features children from a center in Louisville, Ky. who traveled to South Africa to help bridge the digital divide internationally.

#### Louisville Youths Visit South Africa, Help Start Computer Center

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – "I am so blessed. I have a roof over my head and my own room. One family I saw had a small shack with 10 people living there. I need to stop complaining about the stuff I don't have and thank God for what I do have," said 13-year-old Chiquita Taylor.

Chiquita and seven other youths ages 12-15 from the Shawnee Gardens Computerized Neighborhood Networks Center, Louisville, Ky., traveled to South Africa to help start a computer center at a church in Johannesburg. Donated were three computers, three printers and Windows software to the Hillbrow Independent Baptist Church.

The trip was part of Shawnee Gardens' tutorial program. The center formed partnerships with a school system and church in South Africa, and the center's youths corresponded with their "e-pal" counterparts, sharing information about their respective countries, lives and interests.

#### Trip Fulfills Dream for Developer

In 1989, Clifford Turner led the effort to transform the closed Shawnee Elementary School into the Shawnee Gardens Apartments, a HUD-assisted and –insured property. Besides creating affordable housing for minorities, Turner also wanted to introduce youths to a different culture.

"We concentrate on developing the minds of young people as opposed to creating amenities like swimming pools and tennis courts to get people out of their homes," said Turner.

To make this a reality, Turner, manager of the Shawnee Gardens Apartments, and Hannea Conley, president of the Shawnee Gardens Tenants Association and the tutorial program enlisted the support of local business and community leaders.

Each youth was responsible for \$400 of the trip's cost. To cover the remaining costs, Patricia Gillenwater, a



tutor at the center, and the youths and their parents sold cookies and sought and received in-kind contributions.

Some of the donors included community members; Canaan Missionary Baptist Church; The Cralle Foundation; and Alice Houston, Automotive Carrier Services of Louisville.

In addition, the McConnell Technology & Training Center of Louisville donated the computer equipment, the Transit Authority of River City donated monogrammed pencils, Initiatives International donated t-shirts and Delta Airlines and South African Airways discounted fares. Delta and South Africa Airways' contribution marked the first joint-venture sponsorship of an African-American educational program.

"This trip and the new computer lab would not have been possible without the support we received from the community, businesses and corporate leaders," Turner said. "This lab will give the kids their access to the outside world that they didn't have in the past and it will help draw people into the church and help uplift the Hillbrow community."

#### Youths Receive Warm Welcome, Present Gifts

The Louisville youths were greeted in style with a warm welcome from royalty and tribal officials, including a tribal dance performed by their hosts. The youths responded in South African custom with hymns.

"It really made me feel good to see that," said 12-year-old Stephen Freeman. "They really went out of their way to make us feel welcome and I felt like they'd known us for a long time instead of this being our first meeting."

The youths and their e-pals attended a Sunday worship service. After the service, the center youths gave their new friends the monogrammed pencils, key chains, coin purses and Shawnee Gardens Tenants Association t-shirts.

"Their view of gifts is definitely different from how a lot of people in America view them," said 14-year-old Monet Duke. "While some Americans may think that pencils and t-shirts are just trinkets, the kids here were really thankful and went out of their way to show us how much they appreciated the gifts we gave them."

The youths visited the Seidet Computer School, toured the palace of the Ndebele Tribal Village, met the village's king and queen, visited the former home of President Nelson Mandela and dined with members of the African National Congress.

"All of the important people we met that day treated us like family," said 13-year-old Remy Hammock. "Pretty soon, I forgot we were talking to a king and queen."

#### Youths Learn from Each Other

It was truly a learning experience for all the youth. The South African youths learned that the people they see on American television programs are not representative; the American youths commented that South Africa's school system is much different than the United States.



"They have to learn 11 different languages and they're so much more advanced in math than we are," said Chiquita. "A 10-year-old boy asked me what my shoe size was. I told him and he was able to quickly calculate in fractions the difference between my shoe size and his. I felt like there's so much more than I need to learn."

"They asked us a lot of questions about school shootings and [talk-show hosts] Ricki Lake and Jerry Springer," Monet said. "TV really makes our country look bad. We showed them that not all Americans behaved that way. It felt good that they understood that and accepted us as normal people."

#### **Depressed Regions Teach Lessons About Life**

The youths also visited some of the country's depressed regions. They said they learned the most from this experience.

"I'll never forget going into the poor townships," Monet said. "We expected to see poor people, but nothing like the overcrowding and lack of running water in some places. These people have really struggled and it makes you realize just how blessed you are. We have no reason to complain about anything."

"Even though they were poor, all they wanted was to live to see another day," said Stephen. "It made me think that I shouldn't always be asking for things. I should be happy with what I have."

#### 5.3.4 Adult Education

Establishing a comprehensive adult education program will involve far more than just computers at the Neighborhood Networks center. There will need to be classroom or tutorial space for non-computer-based learning and instructors with experience and qualifications needed to teach these classes. Rather than developing an adult education program from the ground up, partner with an existing program in the community. Potential partners are identified in this section. Also, see Section 7 regarding partnerships.

Adult Education generally includes:

General Equivalency Diploma (GED) training. This program teaches
specific academics that earn participants a diploma - equivalent to a
high school diploma when they successfully pass a GED exam.
English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. These programs
teach people the basic skills to speak and understand English. The
class concludes with a test measuring a student's fluency in English.
Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes. These classes enable
residents to develop the ability to read, write and perform basic
math. Learners progress to GED classes.
Lifelong learning opportunities: Extension courses, Associate
degrees and distance learning;
Basic computer education. These workshops introduce participants
to the keyboard and mouse, how to turn the machine on and off



and basic applications which enable the user to operate a computer without supervision and prepare them for advanced training..

Many adults need to feel comfortable in the center. The thought of someone telling them what to do may be intimidating, so comfort with their surroundings is crucial. Here are some issues to consider:

Many adults must bring their children with them to the center. The center
should establish simultaneous classes for the children or a play area.
Some adults prefer to learn among other adults rather than in a class
integrated with children. If possible, set aside teaching time specifically
for adult instruction

■ Many adults work; accommodate their schedules...

#### **Adult Ed Success Stories**

They came from different backgrounds and generations, but they shared a common desire to build a computer.

A two-week computer-assembly course at The Grove Neighborhood Network in Greeley, Colo. let them do that – and more.

"The class was supposed to teach them computer repair and allow them to develop troubleshooting skills," said Thom Mahoney, technical online services coordinator for The Grove Neighborhood Network. "But they took it upon themselves to do so much more with their new skills."

Using old computers and spare parts donated to the center, participants, ranging in age from 12 to 50, built the computers under the guidance of instructor Dave Helmer, while learning new language, such as CPU and motherboard, that has become tech industry jargon.

The computers were being put to good use, Mahoney said. One student donated his computer to a synagogue. Others built them for their own use, including a student who plans to use it so she can learn a second language.

#### 5.3.5 Senior Services

Often family and friends no longer live nearby so many seniors feel isolated. Therefore, it is important to create programs and services that promote quality of life.

Seniors	may enjoy:
	Mentoring younger people
	Games, such as chess or backgammon
	Telecommunications contact with relatives and friends through
	email and Internet phone



Telecommunications and CD-ROM-based travel explorations
Financial planning
Family tree programs and genealogical research
Information about health care and social services
Just being part of the communications age

Seniors often prefer to learn about computers in classes made up of other seniors. Offering a "seniors only" session may spark interest in the center and make seniors more likely to return. Oftentimes, Neighborhood Networks centers offer senior programming during the day, when children attend school and most adults work.

There are seniors who enjoy being around younger people. They make great volunteers and center operators should consider hiring them as part-time staff.

#### **Senior Success Stories**

"My 6-year-old grandson got me interested in computers. He knows so much about them and is good at using them. I figured if he can do it, I can too," says 68-year-old Mildred Hayes.

Hayes is one of 40 seniors who graduated in June 2001 from a computer class offered by the Browns Woods Apartments Neighborhood Networks Center, Browns Mills, N.J., which serves the 150-unit Browns Woods Apartments and the 52-unit Wrightstown Arms.

The nine-month class offered training in basic computer skills, keyboarding, the Microsoft Office software program, desktop publishing, and introduction to the Internet and Web page design.

Now seniors at the Browns Woods center are emailing with relatives and learning more about modern technology.

"It feels good to have this new skill. When someone talks about computers, I can get into the conversation and I don't feel left out," Hayes said.

#### 5.3.6 Career Development and Job Preparation

As with Adult Education, a comprehensive job preparation focus will entail additional, non-computer classroom space and instructors who have the experience and qualifications needed to conduct the classes. Job preparation generally includes both job skills training and job search activities.



Job skills training includes such classes as basic computer literacy, keyboarding skills, word processing, graphics applications, spreadsheets, databases and other office skills.

Job search activities include resume writing workshops; classes teaching interviewing skills, such as what questions to ask and what is likely to be asked; how to dress; workplace behavior training; and, how and where to look for a job.

The factor most likely to produce a successful job preparation program is the availability of real jobs to those who complete the program. If "job prep" is to be a focus of the Neighborhood Networks center, consider forming partnerships with local employers. See Section 7 for more details and a how-to guide.

Local employers can cater the types of training offered, software selection and program emphasis to the types of jobs that are available.

There's no better motivation that the promise of a job after a resident successfully participates in an employment program at a Neighborhood Networks center. A successful technique proven to be particularly motivating in engaging adults in job preparation courses is to present them with promised employment after successful completion of the CTC course.

#### 5.3.7 Job Placement

As in adult education, a focus on job placement works best with collaboration with existing resources in the community. To many residents, job placement activities are only as good as the job offered.

Other important considerations for job placement programs include:

The Neighborhood Networks center may want to develop a database of available jobs in the community. Jobs can be

- database of available jobs in the community. Jobs can be researched by the center's governing board or through partnerships. Other sources might include newspapers and local, regional or national electronic bulletin boards. The Internet contains such Web sites as CareerPath.com (http://www.careerpath.com), which enables searches of job listings from newspapers in eight major cities.
- ☐ Job preparation students may wish to prepare a database of available local jobs and a second database of their own skills and desired types of employment.
- ☐ Centers can recruit local businesses to notify the center of vacant or soon-to-be vacant positions, as well as the eligibility requirements.



	Job openings can be posted on a bulletin board, a community electronic bulletin board, or published in a newsletter or flyer developed by the center itself. Performing these tasks can be assigned to participants in the program.  A Neighborhood Networks center can organize and host a job fair and participants can do the research and implementation of the event. Alternatively, residents can be encouraged and prepared to attend job fairs sponsored by other agencies in the community.			
J.J.0 L	lectionic commerce			
activitie the reso center b	Electronic commerce is a term used to describe a variety of business activities that can be conducted at a Neighborhood Networks center using the resources available. Residents can set up a "home office" of sorts in the center by using the center's computer, printer and fax machine to support their own business. Different varieties of "e-commerce" are described below:			
	Outsourcing is an activity in which the center, or a group of residents, is hired by an organization or business to undertake a task it usually performs itself, such as payroll processing, data processing and inventory. For a fee, the center might perform tasks for local businesses, government agencies, community-based organizations and schools, thereby employing residents to do the work and earn income. The revenue produced through outsourcing is shared with the center.			
	Small business support is an activity in which the center is made available to residents to support their business operations. For example, the center can provide access to computers for			
	accounting, tracking inventory, billing and advertising.  Self-employment involves residents who use the center to perform work for a fee, such as designing fax sheets, producing brochures, providing technical assistance to establish a computer system and creating homepages on the Internet. It is appropriate for the center to be compensated for use.  Entrepreneurship is a business activity created by a resident using			
_	skills learned at the center.			

E-commerce teaches residents computer skills and business skills, which can be a successful combination.

With the potential of money flowing into the Neighborhood Networks center, a few stipulations should be considered.

☐ The National Business Incubation Association offers suggestions for e-commerce for residents. Visit Web site http://www.nbia.org.



	Networks		
<ul> <li>□ The center is likely to need new or additional equipment and the latest software so residents can compete in the marketplace.</li> <li>□ Teenagers and young adults could work with the center to fulfill business contracts, learn business skills and develop relationships with the business community.</li> <li>□ Both the Neighborhood Networks center and residents can be income producing so the center should establish a method of sharing profits.</li> <li>5.4 Developing a Pilot Program</li> <li>It is important to remember that as a new Neighborhood Networks center, many of these programs may appear difficult to create and implement, and worry program planners about the decisions they made. The reality is that a program's strength depends on resident interest and perceived level of success. Even if the data from START indicated a multiplicity of interests and needs, it is probably wise not to try to do everything at once. Plan one or two programs and add public access time.</li> <li>To insure that the initial programs are successful, consider a pilot program. The pilot should be a few sessions of the actual program and it should be tested on a smaller class. If the program works with a few residents, consider expanding it. By piloting a program and telling residents that it is being tested before being fully implemented, there is not as much pressure to succeed and residents will maintain their level of trust in the center's</li> </ul>	What software should the center have?  Regardless of the size of the center's budget, there are basic computer programs that you will need. These fundamental computing tools are:  Word processing (Microsoft Word, Corel Word Perfect, etc.)  Spreadsheets (Microsoft Excel, Lotus 1-2-3, etc.)  Databases (Microsoft Office, Filemaker Pro, etc.)  Graphics (Kidpix, Adobe Photoshop, etc.)  Communications software (Internet Explorer, Netscape, etc.)  Some of your center's computers may already be equipped with these programs. If you need to purchase software, Neighborhood Networks		
<ul><li>5.5 Technology and Neighborhood Networks</li><li>What hardware should a center have?</li></ul>	software from companies such as:  Compumentor: http://www.compumentor.org Gifts In-Kind International: http://www.giftsinkind.org		
One of the first questions you should ask yourself as a center planner is what kind of computer equipment should the center use. A center has a few considerations before deciding about computer needs:  Space  The computers should be located in one room so programs can be developed to include computer classes.  The size of the room dictates how many computers the center can hold. For equipment and general traffic areas, use the measurement of 20 sq. ft. per computer as a gauge.  The computers need sufficient electricity to operate. Check with the	Finally, if you are unfamiliar with how to use these programs, the Land-Grant Training Alliance offers free basic computer training curricula. These lessons are available on-line and can be self-taught or planned as a class. The curricula can be found at http://www.lgta.org.		

property owner or manager for the specifications of the computer

lab. ■ New versus recycled



	New hardware is optimal but it comes with a price tag
	Used computers and equipment are cheaper but some machines
	may be damaged. Also be wary of what you receive. Insist on
	testing the hardware before accepting it.
Pla	tform
	Macintosh-based
	☐ Easy to learn
	☐ More flexible file naming
	☐ Preferred by printers and graphics professionals
	☐ Predominate in K-12 schools
	PC-based
	☐ Predominates in the business arena
	☐ Lower cost for equivalent capacity
Co	st of peripherals
	Each Neighborhood Networks center needs certain accessories to
	make the center more productive and beneficial for residents.
	These peripherals add to the cost of your computer equipment:
	Printers: Printers are essential equipment and there should be one
	for every four to six computers
	Modem, DSL or cable model: One of these is necessary for an
	Internet connection
	Pla

Once the center has made the decision on what to buy and how much it can spend, check out local computer companies to see if they offer discounts for bulk purchasing or to nonprofit organizations. It is also beneficial to look online and search for low cost computer equipment or recycled hardware.

## 5.6 Annual Program Outcomes

To evaluate the overall effectiveness of the center's programs, use START to record goals, activities and outcomes.

START will help you learn which programs are most effective. Also, START is an excellent way to keep track of all center programs. Used as an organizing and evaluative tool, START is a great asset to program development.

# 5.7 Get the Word Out -- Neighborhood Networks Communications

After you have established programs for your residents, make sure to advertise, promote and market their successes. Here are some suggestions for an integrated marketing and communications plan.



#### 5.7.1 Start and Distribute a Neighborhood Networks Newsletter

A newsletter can be a wonderfully effective tool for getting out the word about your cause, issue or organization. It is also an excellent vehicle for building a community and network of people interested in like issues. Newsletters can be in the more traditional print form, on the Web or group e-mail. When planned and executed effectively, newsletters can build awareness about your center.

#### 5.7.1.1 Plan a Newsletter

Even though a newsletter is relatively easy to produce, it is important to think about what your message will be and what you want your residents to learn from it.

The first step is to establish a goal for the newsletter. Is your newsletter's goal to inform? Entertain? Recruit residents to participate in programs? Keep the goal in focus as you plan, write and design the newsletter.

The next step is to know your audience. It is important to consider who the letter is intended to reach. Make the newsletter interesting enough for most community stakeholders to enjoy, but specific enough to target certain people.

Another step is to consider format, design and length. Most newsletters are 8.5"x 11" – the size of a standard letter. Decide about design and format to accommodate how many pages you would like to publish.

Finally, the last aspect that goes into planning a newsletter is frequency. Make sure to create a regular schedule for your newsletter and stick to it. Distribute the newsletter on time, as promised. This shows your residents and stakeholders that you care about the center and you are serious about this means of communicating with them.

#### 5.7.1.2 Newsletter Content

Certainly, you will want to share information about programs and partnerships that benefit the residents. Some other ideas may include highlighting new staff members, special events and new partners or programs.

Another feature is to highlight the center's fund raising efforts. Do not forget to include an appeal for funding in each newsletter. It goes without saying that contributions should be acknowledged and including their name in your newsletter is one way to do this publicly. Some centers find that newsletter donations more than pay for the cost of preparing and mailing the newsletter.

#### Want more information?

Neighborhood Networks offers many guides and fact sheets relating to numerous topics in this manual. Call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center at (888) 312-2743, visit the Web site or use the reference to the publication order form in Section 2 to obtain these helpful tools. Here is some suggested reading for this section:

- Media Relations Guide for Neighborhood Networks Grand Openings
- Neighborhood Networks Special Events Guide



#### 5.7.1.3 Effective Newsletter Practices

Everyone has received unwanted junk mail and it lands in the garbage. To make sure this does not happen to your center's newsletter, create a publication that is inviting to read.. Through its design and content, a newsletter needs to capture the attention of readers.

Here are some helpful ideas for making your newsletter attractive:

Give it a catchy name
Write articles objectively
Write to express, not to impress
Proofread
Use front page articles that draw readers' interest
Use at least one graphic, such as clip art or photograph, per page
For eye appeal, use color liberally but tastefully

#### 5.7.1.4 Publish Your Newsletter

Publishing a newsletter can be costly for a center. If you chose to publish a newsletter in print, try to find a partner within the community who will print it at low cost or for free.

Another low cost alternative to printing paper copies is to publish the newsletter online. This will save the center money and may also be an incentive for residents to look online.

The center's newsletter should be available in public places, such as the offices of the property's management or other places where residents can be found.

#### 5.7.2 Public Relations

As a new member of the community, your Neighborhood Networks center offers a valuable voice to the public good. Many media outlets and local and state representatives are eager to hear what their constituents have to say about the state of the community. As a center director, you can make your voice heard and help voice the concerns of residents.

#### 5.7.2.1 Public Meetings

Public meetings are one of the basic units of democracy. Citizens can listen to and participate in local government. Public meetings do not solve all of the problems of the community, but being heard and representing your Neighborhood Networks center builds a network of supporters and may spark

# Marketing ideas for a small budget

Public outreach is the best way to get the word out about your center and describe what it has to offer. Here are some suggestions about reaching residents:

- Publish a brochure or newsletter describing the programs that you offer and the opportunities at the center.
- □ Hold contests for residents. Everyone loves the chance to be able to win a prize. If you hold a contest, it will draw people in the door. That's a good way to encourage continued patronage of your center.
- Open houses offer a way for residents to poke around the center without making a commitment to return. If you impress them with a program at an open house, then they will be more willing to come back.
- □ Exclusive offers. Offer special offers to children or to residents who return a survey or attend an open house. If you offer incentives for participation, it is likely that people will visit your center.



a local government's interest in the center.

The	ere are a	few considerations when attending a public meeting:	"I h	nave a dream"
☐ Know when and where the meeting will takes place. For maximum public				
	particip	ation, most public meetings are held at night but not all of them.	Ma	king a public presentation
	Know y	our role. It is important to know when to speak and when to hold back	is li	ke making a speech. The
	comme	nt. Discussions can be controversial so know how and when to	bes	st speech makers,
	interjec	your comments. Adding your opinion tactfully will gain you and your	Abr	aham Lincoln, Martin
		espect in the community, as well as public visibility.		her King, Jr. and John F.
		r. Many people are excellent public speakers, but it does take		nnedy, all had a few
	•	Here are some suggestions for speaking in a public forum:		thods in common:
		Stick to the time you have been allotted.		Length. Most great
		Speak from the appointed location in the room, such as at a podium		speeches are relatively
	_	or standing at your chair.		short. A public
		Speak in a clear voice and explain your points concisely and factually.		presentation should be
		Print up copies of your remarks and submit them to the committee		direct and to the point.
		members and staff. Make sure you include your name and contact information.		Emotion. Any great
				public speaker delivers
		Use your real voice but be sensitive to the impact of your passions		his or her words with a
		on other people. Speaking in an angry voice may not gain the results you want.		controlled passion. The listeners are attracted to
		Be prepared to answer questions so it is important that you are		the words by the factual
	_	knowledgeable about your subject matter.		information and the
		Don't take it personally if your remarks are criticized or rejected		emotion behind them.
	_	born take it personally if your remarks are unitazed or rejected		Practice. Most great
5.7.2.2 Contact Local Officials				speeches were not
				written overnight. Make
Loc	Local officials are elected to represent the residents who use your center and			sure to practice your
		w the opinions of their constituents. There are many vehicles for		delivery and think about

For all types of communication with public officials, be as specific as possible. Keep communication brief and introduce your subject right away. It is important to tell the official whether you agree or disagree with his stance

contacting public officials: face-to-face meeting, fax, telephone, email, letter

and how the decision will effect his or her constituents.

Even if the public official disagrees with you, make sure to remain polite, professional and represent your center well.

#### 5.7.2.3 Get Media Attention

writing and petitions.

One of the best ways to draw positive attention to your center is through the media. Television, radio and print journalists are always looking for new angles and interesting stories. If you work with local media, your center can

the impact of your words

on the audience.



receive more volunteers or funding as people are inspired by the work done at your center.

The first step in any media campaign is to think about why you need the attention and what the purpose of the coverage would be. This can be to raise awareness of your center's programs or services, provide a counter argument to the prevailing public opinion or instigate action for your center. Once you decide on the purpose, you will be better at attracting attention.

The next step is to develop your message. This can be done with a press release (see sidebar entitled "How to write a press release"). Although you know that your center is important and deserves recognition, it is necessary to show the media why you feel that way. Develop ideas and be an advocate of your center. This will help attract positive media attention.

Next, know whom to contact. There are two ways of contacting your local press. The first is to look in a local phone book and call all of the media outlets listed. The second is to contact the Neighborhood Networks Information Center and have a Neighborhood Networks staff member develop a media list for your local area.

Finally, it is important to follow up with the media. Just because the press visited your center does not mean it will be featured in the news. Make contact with the reporters who visited your center and ask for an update on the story. Maintain this relationship!

## How to write a press release

Here are a few suggestions on writing a press release that grabs an editor's attention:

- ☐ List the most important information first.
- Provide contact information if the press wants to follow up.
- Answer "Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?" in the release.
- ☐ Write a headline that is catchy, yet meaningful.
- Use quotes that the press can use in their stories.
- Make your story stand out by adding important and interesting details.
- ☐ Send the release to a specific person.
- ☐ Tell a personal story about a resident's positive experience at your center
- ☐ Keep it short.

With some experience, the press will grow accustomed to receiving your press releases. This will help build a positive relationship between your center and the media



## **Section 6: Applying for and Obtaining Nonprofit Status**

As described in Section 3, Neighborhood Networks centers can benefit from becoming a nonprofit, but obtaining 501(c)(3) status requires specific actions in order to qualify. This section describes the steps a center should follow to become a nonprofit organization, a process that is governed by state government. Developing articles of incorporation and bylaws are a critical component of this process, and this section provides guidance on how best to proceed. Finally, this section covers the application process with the IRS for tax-exempt status, the critical step that allows businesses and individuals to make tax-deductible contributions to an organization.

## 6.1 The Technicalities of 501(c)(3)

The next subsections are detail orientated, but provide valuable information to a Neighborhood Networks center applying for nonprofit designation. Although the task may seem daunting, rely on these sections to guide the center through the process. All it takes is a bit of organization and diligence and soon a center can reap the rewards of 501(c)(3) status.

Although these subsections are straightforward and detailed, a center director may desire more information. For any question regarding nonprofit organizations or to assist with receiving tax-exempt status, visit the IRS Web site at <a href="http://www.irs.ustreas.gov">http://www.irs.ustreas.gov</a>.

This site has a wealth of background information about tax-exempt status, such as the exemption process and the various types of organizations that may apply for the same status. This site also provides the annual reporting and filing requirements, applications and forms, as well as relevant IRS publications.

#### 6.1.1 IRS-required forms

To apply for 501(c)(3) status, Neighborhood Networks centers must fill out the following forms and submit them to the IRS:

- ☐ Form 8718 User Fee for Exempt Organizations Determination Letter Request
- ☐ Form 1023 Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC)
- ☐ Form 872-C Consent Fixing Period of Limitation Upon Assessment of Tax Under Section 4940 of the IRC.

## The Easy Eight

As described in section three, there are eight reasons to apply to become a nonprofit organization. For more detail, refer to that section, but here they are again. The process of obtaining 501(c)(3) status may seem daunting at first, but keep referring to the "Easy Eight" for motivation for filling out the forms and applications!

- 1. Legal protection.
- 2. Group ownership of property and money.
- 3. Keep and use profits.
- 4. Cheaper cost of mass mailings.
- Cheaper cost of classified advertising rates.
- 6. Discounted Internet Service Provider.
- 7. Free radio and television public service announcements.
- 8. Low to no-cost government training.



Does this sound very complicated? Although it appears that this process is difficult and the forms are confusing, the process of applying for 501(c)(3) status is relatively easy.

The forms are available for free by calling the IRS at (800) 829-3676. Also available at no charge is the IRS publication 557, Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization. This publication has instructions for filling out many of the 501(c)(3) forms.

When applying for 501(c)(3) status, it would be useful to review applications of other Neighborhood Networks centers or organizations similar to yours. By law, nonprofit organizations must allow public inspection of their 501(c)(3) applications.

Also, by asking organizations within the community, relationships can begin to bud. Other organizations can help your center by reviewing your 501(c)(3) application or even by partnering with your center in the future.

#### 6.1.1.1 Sample Forms

Sample forms can be found on the IRS's Web site at http://www.irs.gov.

#### 6.1.2 Cost of Filing as a Nonprofit

Fees range from \$150 to \$500 depending on your center's annual gross receipts. Form 8718 (User Fee for Exempt Organization Determination Letter Request) must be filed with Form 1023 to apply for 501(c)(3) status. The IRS will not process the application until the user fee is paid.

For more information and sample forms, visit the IRS's Web site at http://www.irs.ustreas.gov.

#### 6.1.3 Prerequisites to Filing

A Neighborhood Networks should be legally established under the applicable laws of your state in which the center is located. The secretary of state's office can provide information on required organizational documents, such as articles of incorporation and bylaws, which must conform to your state's statutory requirements. To find information about your state's Secretary of State, go to <a href="http://www.nass.org">http://www.nass.org</a>.

Many of states' articles of incorporation have similar requirements, including an organizations mission statement and by-laws.

#### Caution!

Apply for 501(c)(3) status within 15 months of incorporation or your center may not be eligible to qualify for exempt status during the period before the date of your center's application.



#### 6.1.4 Deadlines for Filing

If you want 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status to be in effect from the beginning of your center's formation, you will generally need to file Form 1023 within 15 months from the end of the month in which your center was legally organized. If that date has passed, your center will not qualify for exempt status during the period before the date of its application

#### 6.1.5 Eligible Organizations

To qualify for 501(c)(3) status, your center must be organized and operated for one of the following purposes: religious, educational, charitable, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, to foster national or international sports competition, or for prevention of cruelty to children or animals. (please see side bar entitled "501(c)(3) Eligible Organizations") The articles of incorporation must limit the organization's purpose to one or more of these purposes and must provide for the dedication and distribution of assets upon dissolution for one of these purposes. Your articles of incorporation must also indicate that no substantial part of your organization's activities will include the dissemination of propaganda, the influencing of legislation, or participation or intervention in a political campaign.

#### 501(c)(3) Eligible Organizations

A Neighborhood Networks center must qualify underneath one of the major qualifications of organizations as designated by the IRS. Many of the qualifications are very broad and a center should have no trouble fitting underneath one of them. Here are brief descriptions of the major categories, even some that a center will not be able to fit under:

unc	to mount one of thom. There are blief accomptions of the major categories, even come that a content will not be
abl	e to fit under:
	<u>Charitable organizations</u> : charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, etc. organizations. Many
	Neighborhood Networks centers fit under this category.
	Social welfare organizations: civic leagues, community organizations, etc. Many Neighborhood Networks
	centers fit under this category.
	Labor and agricultural organizations: labor unions, farm bureaus, etc.
	Business leagues: trade associations, chambers of commerce, real estate boards, etc.
	Social clubs: hobby clubs, country clubs, etc.
	Fraternal societies: lodges and similar orders and associations.
	Veterans' organizations: posts or organizations of past or present members of the Armed Forces of the United
	States.
	Employees' associations: voluntary employees' benefit associations and local associations of employees.
	Political organizations: campaign committees, political parties, and political action committees.
	Other tax exempt organizations: miscellaneous types of organizations that qualify for exemption from Federal
	income tax

For any questions regarding where your Neighborhood Networks center may fall, visit the IRS's Web site at <a href="http://www.irs.gov/bus\_info/eo/eo-types.html">http://www.irs.gov/bus\_info/eo/eo-types.html</a>.



#### 6.1.6 Articles of Incorporation

Conformed copies of your center's articles of incorporation and bylaws (subsection 6.1.7), both of which must first be approved by the appropriate state official, must be filed with Form 1023. A conformed copy includes a statement by an officer or director swearing that the documents are true and correct copies of the originals. IRS Publication 557 includes an example of articles of incorporation that meet IRS requirements and helps to explain this process.

Many Neighborhood Networks centers have applied for 501(c)(3) status and have had to first incorporate in their state. Information regarding each states requirements, including the cost of incorporation, can be found at the National Association of Secretaries of State's Web site at <a href="http://www.nass.org/sos/sos.html">http://www.nass.org/sos/sos.html</a>. (please see example of articles of incorporation under "Sample Articles of Incorporation")

#### "Sample Articles of Incorporation"

Most states require that a Neighborhood Networks center incorporate before applying for 501(c)(3) status. The form is relatively easy and the cost is minimal, but the level of effort and the fee vary by states. To find out more information about the state in which your center is located, see the National Association of Secretaries of State at http://www.nass.org/sos/sos.html.

Click here for an example of an application from Maryland, which should give a center a good idea of the requirements of Articles of Incorporation: http://www.atlasusa.org/tools.statutes/inc-md.html.

Incorporating in most states is very easy. There are a few steps that must be followed:.

Step 1: Choose a mission

Just like the 501(c)(3) application, your Neighborhood Networks center must decide what kind of nonprofit organization you would like to form. (a list of the options can be found in this section in the side bar entitled "501(c)(3) Eligible Organizations").

Step 2: Contact the Secretary of State
When you contact the secretary of state's office, you will be asked to
define your charitable purpose and provide some other basic information.
This collection of information is known as your "articles of incorporation,"
and it includes:

The name of the Neighborhood Networks cente
Its purpose



Names and addresses of board members (see Step 3, below)
Bylaws (see Section 6.1.7)

Each state makes its own laws on incorporation and rules may vary. Check your state first before rounding up your requirements.

#### Step 3: Name Your Board of Directors

Called a board of directors or board of governors, members officially govern the Neighborhood Networks center. You will probably want a board not only for the richness of its ideas and moral support, but because board members can bring talents and financial backing to the organization. The board should resemble the community in which you serve and will also be necessary for filing for 501(c)(3) status.

Building a nonprofit board of directors is a long-term process. Don't expect immediate success and before you start searching for quality board members, make sure you know what you would like the board to do.

One way to approach this issue is to write a job description for board members or identify a few qualifications that you would like to have represented on your board. Here are some examples of a wish list of people to comprise your board. You might seek a person who is:

Ч	A person who is independently wealthy that can give illiancial
	support to your center;
	A person who has plenty of free time to commit to the board;
	A person who is well connected within the community to speak to
	public officials; and
	A person from the community that the center serves to give
	residents a sense of trust in the organization.
	A community business leader and civic leader.
	A business manager familiar with accounting and other business
	practices.

One of the most important aspects of recruiting a board of directors or governors is to emphasize the idea of term limits. Make sure that the board members know that they are not serving an indefinite term. This allows the board to renew itself every few years and fresh viewpoints are vital to keep in touch with the community surrounding your Neighborhood Networks center.

#### Step 4: Draft Bylaws

A Neighborhood Networks center needs a plan of operation. See Section 6.1.7 for a guide to drafting bylaws.

Step 5: File for Incorporation

#### **Board Orientation Materials**

Although a center director knows the inner workings of the Neighborhood Networks center, he or she cannot accomplish all of the center's goals. By recruiting an effective board, a center can help itself with outreach, fundraising and much more.

To shorten the length of the learning curve for your board members, provide new members with an orientation packet. This will allow them to become familiar with your center.

Some information is vital to give to new board members:

- Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws
- ☐ Statement of board member duties and responsibilities
- □ Neighborhood Networks program descriptions
- □ Annual Report
- Budgets
- ☐ Schedule of board meeting dates and times
- ☐ Information on the community or the Neighborhood Networks initiative in general
- □ Recent board meeting or resident meeting minutes

When board members can learn quickly about your organization, then they can contribute to the center more quickly.



Filing a center's articles of incorporation is like filing a personal income tax return. The process is necessary, but basically the requirements are that all of the questions are answered correctly and all of the paperwork is attached. Once these few easy steps are completed, the Neighborhood Networks center is a few weeks away from incorporation.

Step 6: Another Form – IRS Form 990

IRS Form 990 is an annual requirement of the IRS for charitable organizations. Filing an accurate and complete Form 990 with the IRS and state charity officials is the law. This form allows your center to obtain a federal employer-identification number. You'll need this ID number to set up a bank account, apply for grants, hire employees and produce required reports. For more information on Form 990, visit the Urban Institute's Web site at http://www.gual990.org.

#### 6.1.7 Bylaws

As mentioned in Section 6.1.6, bylaws are required by the 501(c)(3) status. Bylaws set out the rules and procedures for orderly operation and control of your organization, resolution of disputes and legal procedures for holding meetings, electing directors and officers, and handling other business. (please see an example of a Neighborhood Networks center bylaws in "Sample Bylaws")

#### Sample Bylaws

Manual I

Bylaws can be compared to an organizations' constitution. The document lays out the structure that a Neighborhood Networks center will take on and the goals that it hopes to accomplish. Here are sample bylaws that a center can use by filling in the blanks. Be aware that bylaws are serious in nature and will affect the legal and operational aspects of your center. It is possible to add items or delete items from this template and craft your own bylaws.

A bylaw template can be found at <a href="http://www.mncn.org/bylaws.htm">http://www.mncn.org/bylaws.htm</a>.

### 6.1.8 Necessary Information for 501(c)(3) application

A Neighborhood Networks center must provide a detailed narrative of activities in the Form 1023 application. The narrative must demonstrate that your activities meet one of the exempt purposes and qualify the organization for tax exemption. You should word this section carefully and fully to present a complete picture of your center. (see side bar entitled "501(c)(3) Narrative Tips and Hints")

## 501(c)(3) status Narrative Tips and Hints

The narrative portion of your center's 501(c)(3) application is usually the first item the IRS reads and should be compelling and to the point, all the while convincing the IRS to approve your center's



Form 1023 also requests information on your sources of financial support, fundraising programs, the governing board, related organizations, management agreements and lease agreements, membership benefits, fees for services and whether services are limited to specific individuals. Form 1023 also includes questions about lobbying and political activities.

Certain types of organizations must file additional schedules with Form 1023. All organizations must include either three years of historical or two years of projected statements of revenue and expenses and a current balance sheet.

Usually, organizations with a limited history receive an advance ruling from the IRS indicating they will be treated as publicly-supported organizations subject to review at the end of a five-year period. Form 872-C documents your organization's agreement to pay tax on investment income earned during the advance ruling period if public

#### The 501(c)(3) Process -- Inside and Out

There are many resources within this manual, through Neighborhood Networks and in your local community, that can assist you in successfully completing the nonprofit application.

In section 3, you can find a sidebar entitled "Accounting Terms in Plain English." This box describes some of the technical words in this section and may be helpful during the application process.

The other resource is the Neighborhood Networks information line. A Neighborhood Networks Technical Representative is skilled in the 501(c)(3) process and will be able to assist you over the phone. The toll-free number is (888) 312-2743.

Many local officials and law students at colleges or universities in your area are willing to assist Neighborhood Networks centers in filing the IRS-required forms. To ask for help, contact a law school near to you or the local HUD Coordinator for contacts within your community.

Finally, The Foundation Center is a national nonprofit with local affiliates in most major regions of the country. The Center provides free advice on the process of forming your nonprofit organization. For more information and for the affiliate near you, visit The Foundation Center's Web site at <a href="http://www.fundcenter.org">http://www.fundcenter.org</a>.



### **Section 7: Partnership Development**

Centers can help enhance their programs and build sustainability through partnerships with public agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and other community institutions. For example, a center might partner with a local health clinic to offer free vaccinations to young residents. Often, the best partnership opportunities are right in a center's community.

Partnerships can range from brief, casual relationships between a couple of businesses pulling off a one-time-only event, to multi-year agreements between numerous organizations to create a program that will last years.

This section focuses on the process center staff can use to recruit and sustain partnerships, based on the asset mapping process described in Section 4. It helps center organizers determine the type of partnership desired the potential resources available, and how best to position their center with potential partners. This section also provides a sample memorandum of understanding between a center and a partner.

Among the potential partnerships available to centers are national partnerships established between HUD and national public or private organizations. Through these partnerships, individual centers across the country can easily access products and services negotiated between HUD and the national partner. These national partnerships are also described.

## 7.1 The First Steps to Partnerships

The first step towards building successful partnerships is knowing which companies would benefit your center. The process to identify these potential partners is like a job search for the Neighborhood Networks center. It is important to assess your center's assets that may be marketable to employers and identify which companies and/or organizations are the best match between those skills and interests.

Partnerships are identified and developed based on the center's goals and objectives, which you may have already developed in accordance with Section 3 of this manual. These goals and objectives should be recorded in the START tool.

Designing partnerships is similar to designing programs, which is covered in Section 5. As with program development, partnerships should benefit both the center and the majority of the community while coinciding with the residents' needs.

#### **Partnership Benefits**

Thoughtful creation of a partnership can benefit a Neighborhood Networks center by:

- Increasing volunteer and resident participation in center activities
- ☐ Increasing resources goods, services, volunteers and money
- ☐ Recruiting an ally or mentor
- ☐ Establishing greater ties to the community



Finally, searching for potential partners should be a relatively easy process using Section 4. By creating an asset map of your community, you may have identified numerous businesses and organizations near your center. There are many ways to tap these resources through partnerships.

#### **Partnership Matching Activity**

To get your creative partnership juices flowing, here is a scenario that may be similar to your situation. Try to think of as many answers to all of the questions below. After this activity is completed, make sure to continue through this section as you may find more answers.

You are the director of a new Neighborhood Networks center for a multifamily property. You had an opening event with mildly successful attendance. Daily, the center has some activity, but you need to build the skills of the residents to increase computer usage. You have very little money to pay an instructor and cannot afford to spend your time teaching a class. Which organizations can you approach to create a partnership that will provide onsite computer training at the Neighborhood Networks center and will be geared towards the adults job development needs? What about programs that are geared towards children's computer literacy needs?

Remember to take your time answering and refer back to your asset map. There are potential partners throughout your community.

## 7.2 Identify Potential Partners

There are many potential partners within your community. It is important to consider the valuable role that partners can play to your Neighborhood Networks center. Make sure to remember these important questions when starting partnerships:

What are my center's goals? Centers should regularly evaluate whether a partnership would help to achieve center goals. For example, a center goal may be to help residents learn computer skills so they find jobs with local employers. A partnership with a local community college to provide low-cost computer training could achieve this goal.



- What should we improve? When centers identify places for improvement via assessment techniques, the centers should consider whether a partnership could help to make this improvement. For example, residents at a property would like to make improvements on a playing field on the property. By partnering with a local sporting goods company and a hardware store and recruiting local volunteers, the playing field could be made to look like new at little to no cost.
- What opportunities can we take advantage of? Sometimes, another organization offers to partner with your center, or a foundation announces an initiative to give away free furniture or free computer software. Of course, consider partnering with these opportunities and think about more ways that your center can benefit from the relationship.

## 7.3 Determine a Type of Partnership

Neighborhood Networks centers establish partnerships with differing levels of intensity. Some centers contact their partners once or twice a year. Other centers work with a partner on a daily basis. Here are four different types of partnerships – from informal arrangements to nearly complete integration between two or more organizations:

- □ Networking partnership. This type of partnership involves the exchange of information for the betterment of both organizations. For example, this type of partnership could involve a center that collects the names of interested computer users and delivers the names to an organization that offers inexpensive computer classes.
- □ Coordinating partnership. This is a relationship that occurs when two or more organizations work together to make sure that activities do not overlap. For example, a Neighborhood Networks center that offers a day care program could partner with a local YMCA that offers an after-school program. The two could make arrangements so that children in pre-school go to the YMCA, and children in grade school go to the Neighborhood Networks center. With this relationship, each organization can specialize in the specific needs of each age group, and not overlap in the provision of day care services.
- □ Cooperating partnership. In these partnerships, organizations share resources to achieve a common goal. For example, a Neighborhood Networks center with a local day care center could partner with a church group that owns a van. The Neighborhood Networks center could offer free childcare to church members during services. In return, the church could give the Neighborhood Networks center access to the van.



□ Collaborative partnership. This occurs when two organizations work together to the extent that they share "risks, responsibilities, and rewards." This type of relationship occurs at the Montgomery Townhouses Neighborhood Networks Computer Training Center in Philadelphia. This Neighborhood Networks center, in partnership with Philadelphia's Please Touch Museum, prepares participants to work in childcare and other jobs and offers internship opportunities to successful participants. Residents who complete a 12-week program are eligible for a seven-week paid internship with one of several childhood programs, including the PHA Early Childhood Program, the Office of Emergency Shelter and Services, Please Touch Museum and accredited Greater Philadelphia child care programs.

## 7.4 Types of Resources

Local partners can provide many services for your residents. There are countless examples of successful partners, but here are some typical services that partners can provide to a Neighborhood Networks center:

Volunteers car	help teach classe	es or organize ev	ents

- In-kind goods and services are usually free or reduced-price items from local partners. Some centers have received coupons for free groceries, dental exams, drivers, deliveries, computers and technical support.
- On-site programming provides residents with classes that they would normally have to go away from home to receive. Oftentimes, the best providers of programming are local colleges and universities.
- ☐ Partners can provide financial support. This is covered in the fundraising portion of this section.

#### 7.5 Potential Partners

One of the most difficult parts of finding partners within the community has already been done in Section 3. The asset map that you created of resources around your center is a great way to begin looking for ways to strengthen the services you provide to the residents.

Make sure to investigate the partnership potential of:

Local	government
-------	------------

- Large and small businesses
- ☐ Community and civic organizations
- ☐ Faith-based organizations
- □ Schools
- Colleges and universities

#### Want more information?

Neighborhood Networks offers many guides and fact sheets relating to numerous topics in this manual. Call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center at (888) 312-2743, visit the Web site or use the reference to the publication order form in Section 2 to obtain these helpful tools. Here is some suggested reading for this section:

 Becoming a Neighborhood Networks Partner: Strategic Philanthropic Investments in Community Building



State and regional government and organizations
National companies and organizations

#### **Partnership Success Stories**

#### **Delaware Residents Bank on Job Training**

Boasting a 98 percent job placement rate for graduates of a comprehensive job training program, the Neighborhood Networks center at Bethel Villa Apartments, in Wilmington, Del., has lined up jobs for dozens of residents and community members. The center currently partners with four local banks, who are happy to contribute to the center's job training and education efforts to gain well-trained employees. Bank representatives work one-on-one with residents to help them hone their interviewing and job skills.

#### Louisville Youths Visit South Africa, Help Start Computer Center

Eight youths ages 12-15 from the Shawnee Gardens Computerized Neighborhood Networks Center, Louisville, Ky., traveled to South Africa to help start a computer center at a church in Johannesburg. The center had formed partnerships with a school system and church in South Africa, and the center's youths corresponded with their "e-pal" counterparts, sharing information about their respective countries, lives and interests. The trip was part of Shawnee Gardens' tutorial program.

#### California Center Users Gain Benefits of HUD Grant

The Coleman-James Learning Center, in Pasadena, Calif., gives users the opportunity to participate in the arts. Through a partnership with the Armory Art Center, a local studio, three volunteers teach art to children each Saturday and a music teacher directs choirs and teaches voice to adults.

#### North Dakota Center Gains a Valuable Employee

Through a partnership between the LaGrave Learning Center, in Grand Forks, N.D., and the AARP Senior Employment Program, Eleanor Jones has become a valuable employee at the center. Jones joined the LaGrave staff in 1996 as an administrative assistant. Now a computer instructor, Jones has fostered a supportive learning environment with her knack for helping first-time computer users feel comfortable.

#### Virginia Neighborhood Networks Center Joins Forces with the FBI

The Norfolk Office of the FBI has been working with the We Care Center in Virginia Beach, Va., since 1996. Three times a week, for two hours, FBI instructors provide formal training. The training includes keyboarding skills, word processing, database and spreadsheet development, job searching, interviewing and resume writing.



#### **National Neighborhood Networks Partners**

The Neighborhood Networks initiative has established relationships with numerous national organizations that local centers may be able to tap into:

American Association of Community Colleges – The American Association of Community Colleges is the national organization for two-year associate degree granting institutions. The association works with other higher education associations, the federal government, Congress, and other national associations that represent the public and private sectors to promote the goals of community colleges and higher education. Through the partnership, Neighborhood Networks centers gain access to training and resources from local junior colleges. <a href="http://www.aacc.nche.edu">http://www.aacc.nche.edu</a>

The Bureau of Primary Health Care – The Bureau of Primary Health Care is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Health Resources and Services Administration. The Bureau of Primary Health Care provides funding to more than 3,000 community health care centers across the country. Through the partnership, Neighborhood Networks center residents receive health care education on such topics as high blood pressure, diabetes and healthy living. Health care providers also provide physicals and other types of health care to residents. http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov

California State University System – California State University System has two service learning programs. One is a health-related community learning program funded through the Corporation for National Service, which provides information and services to underprivileged communities. The other is a governor-mandated service learning requirement for all public university and college students. Through the partnership, Neighborhood Networks centers have access to resources and student trainers made available through local colleges and universities in the California State University System. The partnership is available to Neighborhood Networks centers in California. <a href="http://www.calstate.edu">http://www.calstate.edu</a>

Centers of Excellence in Women's Health – Centers of Excellence were established by the Office on Women's Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1996. Currently, there are sixteen Centers of Excellence located at leading medical schools across the country. The centers integrate women's health services, research programs, public education and professional training, and forge links with health care services in the community. In Los Angeles, two



Neighborhood Networks centers that have local partnerships with the UCLA Center of Excellence receive informational health publications. http://www.4woman.gov/COE/index.htm

**Digital Art Communities** — Digital Art Communities is a national nonprofit organization that supports the Digital Arts Youth program. Through the partnership, youth can learn technical skills and develop digital imaging projects, Web pages, digital video and animation. Under the Digital Arts Youth program, kids at a Neighborhood Networks center in Miami sold t-shirts they had designed for community residents. Proceeds from the t-shirt sale were used to purchase hardware and software for the center. <a href="http://www.geocities.com/arttechycp/index.html">http://www.geocities.com/arttechycp/index.html</a>

HOPE worldwide (HOPE) – HOPE worldwide is a national organization with about 40,000 volunteers. Through the partnership, HOPE volunteers educate Neighborhood Networks center residents on such topics as the state children's health insurance program, which provides health care access to children of low-income households, and childhood and adult immunizations. HOPE volunteers also distribute information about nutrition, lead poisoning, asthma and HIV/AIDS. Several Neighborhood Networks centers and HOPE subsidiaries from Baltimore, Maryland to Tacoma, Washington created long-term, local partnerships and sponsored health care events where HOPE volunteers conducted health seminars, provided health care information, and distributed food and clothing to residents. http://www.hopeww.org

The National Council on the Aging – The National Council on the Aging (NCOA) is an association of organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting the dignity, self determination, well-being and continuing contributions of older persons through leadership, service, education and advocacy. Through the partnership, residents of senior centers gain valuable computer skills and job training needed to re-enter today's workforce. In Philadelphia, nine senior clients of the NCOA have begun job-readiness training at a Neighborhood Networks center. http://www.ncoa.org

NCOA also provides access to the Consumer Information Network, which is a national network of 4,500 community organizations that helps inform older consumers and their families about key information on aging - primarily health information. Neighborhood Networks centers can register online for the Consumer Information Network to receive videos, pamphlets, and other information. http://www.ncoa.org/CIN/cin\_intro.html



**Technology For All** – Technology For All is a national nonprofit organization that aims to bridge the digital divide by creating educational, economic and personal opportunities for underserved children, youth, and their families through access to technology and community relationships. Through this partnership, residents can obtain access to Microsoft Office Suite, SmartForce online educational courses and K-12 learning software. <a href="http://www.techforall.org">http://www.techforall.org</a>

**ThinkQuest** – ThinkQuest is a program for students aged 12-19 that encourages the use of the Internet to create information rich Web-based educational tools and materials. Through the partnership, youth obtain valuable Web-design tools, win scholarships and awards, and are encouraged to participate in an annual competition. <a href="http://www.thinkquest.org">http://www.thinkquest.org</a>

Youth Venture – Youth Venture is a national nonprofit that invests in young people as change makers by providing them the opportunity to create, lead, and launch their own organizations, clubs, or businesses that make a difference in their community. Through the partnership, youth between the ages of 12-20 are provided access to computer, software, and technical training to create youth-led computer-based initiatives. http://www.youthventure.org

Youth as Resources – Youth as Resources develops and funds through mini-grants youth-organized community service activities and programs. The partnership provides leadership training, mentoring, volunteers and curriculum to youth-serving organizations by assisting in the development of volunteer projects designed and implemented by young people between the ages of five and 21. <a href="http://www.yar.org">http://www.yar.org</a>

## 7.6 Starting the Partnership

Now that you have used your asset map and brainstormed ideas of identifying potential local partners, it is time to prioritize and organize the list. This may seem like a lengthy task, but with a little research, even the largest organizations can seem very reachable. To look into companies, here are a few places to research:

Ч	Newspaper articles
	Annual reports
	Web sites
	Networking with center supporters and friends

Now that you know something about each one of your partners, it is time to identify the right individual to approach. Here are a few suggestions of how to select which partners may be most beneficial for the center:



Capacity. Can the potential partner really offer what your center hopes
to achieve? Does the organization provide the service that the center
needs, but has too few staff to meet your demand?
Proximity. The distance between the partner's location and the center
will likely influence the frequency of activities that occur in a partnership
Is the partner too away? Does the partner not know the community tha
you serve because their organization is too far away? Does a potential
partner provide similar services and is too close to your center to give
healthy overlap of services to the community?
Level of effort. What is the level of effort that your Neighborhood
Networks center will need to make to attract and sustain the interest of
potential partner? Will the level of effort that you put in to maintaining
the partnership reflect the quality or quantity of services that the
residents receive?
Reputation. Is the potential partner known to be receptive to
partnership requests? Has the potential partner enjoyed financial
success recently? Is the organization respected in the community?
Does the organization have good business practices?
2000 the organization have good business practices:

# 7.7 Be a Good Salesperson – Neighborhood Networks Center Assets

Partnerships are two-way streets. In order for a center to receive something from a partnership, it must usually give something or help the partner accomplish something in return. Not only is this a healthy relationship, but it makes the process of "selling" a Neighborhood Networks center easier and more successful.

Here are some ideas to express to potential partners why Neighborhood Networks centers make great community partners:

- □ Provide press. Organizations love positive press. Offer to write a press release, invite local newspapers, television news crews or write an article about the good will of your potential partner and the relationship with your center.
- ☐ Fulfill an organization's mission. Many community-based organizations have missions that include community outreach. A Neighborhood Networks center is for residents of "underserved communities," so make sure to mention that when speaking with potential partners. An organization needs to provide services to the area and a Neighborhood Networks center is a great place to begin.
- □ Access to a specific population. Do residents in your community fall below a certain income level? Are they at

#### Don't Be Scared!

Although this section gives you many ways to select a partner based on capacity, proximity, level of effort and reputation, it is not meant to intimidate vou. Often, it is easier for a smaller organization to partner because fewer people are involved and it receives fewer requests for assistance. But there are exceptions to every rule. The William H. Gates Foundation (founded by Microsoft CEO Bill Gates) will donate an estimated \$500 million to organizations around the world in 2002.

Remember: a Neighborhood Networks center plays a large role in supporting the surrounding community. Many organizations, large and small, recognize the effort that a center puts into the neighborhood and oftentimes reward the work. You never know what you may miss if you don't ask.



high risk for certain health problems? Some organizations have a mission to assist communities with certain attributes. ☐ Create an active community. Some residents are very wellinformed and active in the community. This can be a selling point to businesses or organizations that may be interested in feedback, involvement or business from your community. Also, some organizations may be short-handed and will gladly exchange goods or services for volunteers from the center. For example, a League of Women's Voters might donate office supplies if residents help with a voter registration drive. ☐ Provide meeting space. Many community organizations simply don't have adequate space to hold meetings or activities. If your center has available space, offer it. Access to computers and Internet. In return for volunteers. goods or services from a partner organization, your center could offer the organization's members or staff access to computers for a set number of hours a week to surf the web, do word processing, manage finances or join in computer classes ongoing at the center. ☐ Share staff. If the partner organization is short-handed and your center can handle it, it may be possible to share staff time or expertise. Make sure to offer the assistance of your center staff or volunteers if you are able to.



#### "Would you like to switch long distance plans...?"

Most people have received this annoying phone call and wished that the phone had never rang. Why are telemarketers so bothersome? They seem to call at the wrong time and try to encourage strangers to sign up for some special offer.

When calling potential partners, make sure to not take the telemarketer approach. Most "cold calls" that you receive from companies offer great deals, but most people are not patient enough to hear the details of the offer. When trying to begin a relationship by phone, remember a few things:

1. V	viteri il ying to begin a relationship by prione, remember a lew tillings.
	Ask for the correct person and pronounce his or her name correctly. This should be the person who will give the center a chance to access the partner's services.
	Give the interesting information first. Make sure to tell the partner what your Neighborhood Networks center does and how the two organizations can collaborate.
	Be polite and informative. Don't be pushy. Some organizations may say no. Don't keep pushing the person to the point of annoyance.
	Have information at your fingertips. Some people may ask for facts about your center or the resident who use it. Have this information handy. Also make sure to mail, email or fax to a potential partner if they ask for more information.
	Know your role. Don't try to entice a potential partner with attractive offers that might not hold true. That method of selling a product is akin to not reading the fine print.
	Encourage a meeting. If the contact person sounds interested, try to set up an appointment to visit with them and explain why a partnership would be beneficial to both organizations. People listen more intently in person than they do over the phone and an in-person conversation demonstrates interest.

Creating successful partnerships relies heavily on the method of selling your Neighborhood Networks center. Remember to be a community advocate, not a distant telemarketer calling every organization in town. Show that you care about your center and local businesses which will help organizations take you seriously.

# 7.8 The Meeting

If a potential partner decides to meet with you – congratulations! Now you just have to convince them of the qualities of the Neighborhood Networks center. Similar to the initial phone call, during your meeting it is important to remember to speak informatively and sincerely:

- ☐ Make the request. Explain what activities your center would like to pursue and what goods or services the partner could provide.
- Give your pitch. Tell the prospective partner how his or her organization and the Neighborhood Networks center would benefit from the partnership.



Promote your center. Many people actively listen to someone
who is passionate about what they do. Be this person and
convey the strength of your center through your convictions.
Hit the hot buttons. Many organizations have topics of interest
that hit close to home. When completing the research on your
partner, make sure to identify these hot button topics and use
them to your advantage.
Establish credibility. Demonstrate to the partner how your center
can deliver on the promises that you offer. Also, show how the
partnership will increase the clout and reputation of both entities.
Have examples and references ready.
Be flexible. In any relationship, compromise is key. A partner
may want to interact with your center in a way you did not
consider. Be flexible and negotiate a mutually beneficial
arrangement.
•

## 7.9 Next Steps

Make sure to write a thank you note and send the potential partner more information. Again, this shows that you are committed to your center and have a sincere interest in the partnership.

Also, following up with the partner via phone will allow you to be proactive and successful. In the first phone call following the meeting, set up a timeline and a "To Do" list. Regardless of the partner's willingness to work together, you will know when the partner must make a decision.

# 7.10 Beginning a New Relationship

Hopefully, after a few phone calls and information exchanges, you will have a new partner on board. The first step in this new relationship should be putting your arrangement in writing.

#### 7.10.1 Memorandums of Understanding

Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) involve a written agreement between you and your new partner. Senior staff members at both organizations sign this document. Most MOUs mention the excitement of representatives from both organizations at the creation of the partnership and may briefly outline how both organizations will benefit. Most importantly, the MOU details the goals and objectives of the partnership, as specifically outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party.



MOUs are not a necessity nor are they binding agreements. Some organizations may not want to enter into a MOU with your center. This is reasonable and does not weaken the relationship. Some organizations may worry about the commitment inferred through the MOU. Assure your new partner that the MOU is not legally binding – just an explanation of the partnership on paper. MOUs are preferred because the relationship is written for both organizations to reference.

#### 7.10.1.1 Partnership Types, as Defined in the MOU

There are two main types of partners: public-private partnership and strategic partnership.

A public-private partnership occurs when a public entity such as a federal, state, tribal or local government agency, collaborates with the private sector (corporations, nonprofit organizations, foundations or civic groups) to work on specific programs/projects.

A strategic partnership occurs when two or more groups within a business or organization join to work on specific projects or programs, or when two or more like organizations work together on a specific project or program.

The main difference between the two partnerships is the legal entity of the partner. For most relationships with government entities, the relationship is a public-private relationship. If the center works with another center or a nonprofit organization, it usually can be defined as a strategic partnership.

#### 7.10.1.2 MOU Template

Below is a template for drafting a MOU. It contains standard contractual language. Fill in the italic, underlined portions of the template for your center, as well as your partner. After you fill in these areas, reread the MOU for accuracy and clarity; make changes to the standard language if necessary.

# "If at first you don't succeed..."

Try, try again. This proverb is appropriate for developing partners with your Neighborhood Networks center. Some organizations do not have the capacity to partner with you and some just are blind to the benefits of a partnership with your center. Don't be discouraged and keep trying!



# Memorandum of Understanding Between Your Organization And Partnering Organization For Application To specific program, if necessary

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes a <u>type of partnership</u> between <u>your organization</u> and <u>partnering organization</u>.

#### **MISSION**

Brief description of your organization's mission. You might want to also include a sentence about the specific program if applicable.

Brief description of partnering organization's mission.

Together, the Parties enter into this Memorandum of Understanding to mutually promote *describe efforts that this partnership will promote e.g. health care or workforce development*. Accordingly, *your organization* and *partnering organization*, operating under this MOU agree as follows:

#### PURPOSE AND SCOPE

*Your organization* and *partnering organization* – describe the intended results or effects that the organizations hope to achieve, and the area(s) that the specific activities will cover.

- 1. Why are the organizations forming a collaboration? Benefits for the organization?
- 2. Who is the target population?
- 3. How does the target population benefit?

Include issues of funding if necessary. For example, "Each organization of this MOU is responsible for its own expenses related to this MOU. There will/will not be an exchange of funds between the parties for tasks associated with this MOU."

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

Each party will appoint a person to serve as the official contact and coordinate the activities of each organization in carrying out this MOU. The initial appointees of each organization are:

List contact persons with address and telephone information

The organizations agree to the following tasks for this MOU:

*Your organization* will:



List tasks of your organization as bullet points

Partnering organization will:

List tasks of partnering organization as bullet points

Your organization and partnering organization will:

List shared tasks as bullet points

#### TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING

The term of this MOU is for a period of *insert length* of MOU, usually 1-3 years from the effective date of this agreement and may be extended upon written mutual agreement. It shall be reviewed at least *insert how often, usually annually*, to ensure that it is fulfilling its purpose and to make any necessary revisions.

Either organization may terminate this MOU upon thirty (30) days written notice without penalties or liabilities.

#### **AUTHORIZATION**

Your organization:

The signing of this MOU is not a formal undertaking. It implies that the signatories will strive to reach, to the best of their ability, the objectives stated in the MOU.

On behalf of the organization I represent, I wish to sign this MOU and contribute to its further development.

Name
Title
Organization

Partnering Organization:

Name
Title
Organization

Date



## 7.11 Sustaining the Partnership

Once a partnership is established, make sure to keep it successful by focusing on sustainability:

□ Engage in regular communication
□ Establish one-to-one relationships
□ Actively involve residents and partner stakeholders
□ Plan and publicize joint activities

The best way to sustain a partnership is to keep positive and follow the goals established in the MOU. As with maintaining any healthy relationship, a Neighborhood Networks partnership requires dedication. Remember that residents lives will be improved by working hard with a partner.

#### **Partnership Success Stories**

Of the many residents and center users who have gotten jobs after taking courses at the Bethel Villa Neighborhood Networks Center, in Wilmington, Del., most found jobs in the banking industry, which employs an estimated 8 percent of Delaware's workforce, or almost 32,000 employees, according to state estimates.

Bethel Villa partners with four banks, which contribute to the center's job training and education efforts to gain well-trained employees. Bank representatives visit the center to work one on one with residents who use the center to help them hone their interviewing skills.

Bethel Villa also partners with two banks to offer a four-week Introduction to Banking training course. Citibank employees will teach the course using a curriculum developed by Bethel Villa and the National Bankers Association and, upon completion of the course, participants are guaranteed employment with Citibank and other banks. Thirty residents are participating in the course.

One resident at Bethel Villa Apartments was having problems finding a job until she honed computer skills at the Bethel Villa Neighborhood Networks Center. With new skills and a little self-confidence, she landed a job at a bank. Six months later, she and her family were able to purchase a home.

Another resident at Bethel Villa, was a bank clerk when she enrolled in Bethel Villa's computer courses. Her new skills earned her a promotion and she, too, was able to purchase a home.

More information on sustaining partnerships is available in Manual 2, Section 7.



# **Section 8: Evaluating and Promoting the Center**

By the end of the first year as a Neighborhood Networks center, a great deal has been accomplished. Through program development, partnerships and general operations, it might be hard to remember all of the successes – large and small. Now it is time to evaluate the first year and document how the residents have gained skills and confidence from the programs and services offered by the center.

Many people associate evaluations with long forms of questions that require answering. With proper planning, evaluation activities can be built into the ongoing programs and reduce the effort required to produce helpful feedback about center programs and resident outcomes.

The benefits of evaluation are clear. Centers can incorporate feedback into their programs on a regular basis and enhance the value they provide to residents. Funders and potential partners increasingly require evaluation to verify that programs and services are impacting residents, and will more readily support proven success. Effective evaluation can help centers demonstrate their accomplishments in a clear and measurable manner.

This section describes an evaluation process available to centers through the Strategic Tracking And Reporting Tool (START), the online business planning tool covered in Section 3. Using START as the data collection tool, center planners will learn in this section how to plan an effective evaluation process, collect and analyze data, and communicate the results.

# 8.1 Using START

Luckily for Neighborhood Networks centers, the Strategic Tracking And Reporting Tool (START) offers a convenient way to evaluate a Neighborhood Networks center's first year.

Go to http://www.hud.gov/nnw/startnewcenter/nnwbusiness.html to begin START!

When you first opened the doors of your center, you should have established goals for the year using START. These goals can be accessed through the reporting tool and you can update the progress that you have made. Review your goals and the accomplishments that you have made during the year. Make sure you have added all of the details that you can think of. Complete and accurate information is important to the success of the center.

#### Who Should Do the Evaluation?

Depending on whom you ask, there are two answers to the question regarding who is the best candidate to conduct evaluations. Some people suggest a center insider, while others urge that an outside person will be more objective. There are pros and cons to each choice.

Center staff member or volunteer:

- ☐ Should possess insider knowledge about the center and might be able to find the relevant information guickly.
- May be swayed by results if the evaluation reflects badly on the performance of a staff member or volunteer, he or she may be pressured to suppress the information.

Outside evaluator:

- Should have more objectivity since they should have a wider perspective on the organization and a relatively autonomous position.
- May not have sufficient knowledge of the practices of the center and not give enough feedback through the evaluation.

Regardless of who performs the evaluation, the most important factor is that the results are meaningful.



#### 8.2 Basic Steps of Evaluation

There are four basic steps for a year-end evaluation: planning, determining data collection methods, collecting and analyzing data, and communicating the results.

#### 8.2.1 Planning the Evaluation

Make sure to plan your evaluation ahead of time. If you have been recording your center's progress using START, then the process will be even easier. Make sure to have all of the data available at the beginning of the process.

Evaluators can be a team of center staff or volunteers, or an outside evaluator, such as a college student with specific experience in nonprofit evaluation methods. He or she should set the evaluation goals and develop questions that are important to a center. Make sure to work with the evaluator to provide him or her with enough information to create a valuable report.

#### 8.2.2 Determining Data Collection Methods

After deciding on the questions, it is necessary to decide what information is required to answer these questions and how to collect the pertinent information. Data collection methods include interviews, surveys, observations, focus groups and testing before and after the programs. These methods should be designed so they can be easily integrated into the center's daily operation.

#### 8.2.3 Collecting and Analyzing Data

There are important points to keep in mind when working with data:
 Collect only relevant data that answers the questions presented
 Revise collection strategies after primary analyses. Ask what data are still missing, what is working and what is not. A change in evaluation questions and initial data collection methods can lead to new interpretations and findings.
 Complex statistical analyses are not always necessary. Information on center activities can be summarized using simple methods, like percentage calculations and totals.

#### 8.2.4 STARTing the Evaluation

START provides a ready-made method of evaluating your center on a scale of one to five. It is important to go through and answer these

# Increase Resident Involvement

The collection of data can be made easier if the center's residents see it as an opportunity to improve current programs and establish new ones. Most people will look favorably upon the evaluation method if they know it will benefit them.



questions honestly. The evaluation tool will help you determine the strongest areas of your center, but by no means, does it provide a full evaluation. It is subjective and only used to begin the process of evaluation. Don't be discouraged if you do not receive the highest scores possible. If you did, then your center has nothing to improve!

Access START by visiting the Neighborhood Networks Web page and clicking *START Business Planning Tool* on the left-hand tool bar.

1. Resident Involvement		
1.	Some residents involved in center planning and providing feedback on center program needs and center operational needs.	
2.	Active resident involvement in center planning, programs and operations; Process and information gathering forms/tools to uncover resident program and center operational needs and resident satisfaction.	
3.	Increasing resident satisfaction as through center feedback forms; center process to actively manage alignment between center usage, programs and resources.	
4.	High resident/center user satisfaction as measured by customer feedback forms; high center utilization rates; residents volunteer in center for programs and center management.	
5.	Broad, active resident involvement in volunteering, center management, programming and operations; outreach and center programs for unserved or underserved resident populations.	

2. Community Involvement	
1.	There is little involvement of the community beyond the center location.
2.	Growing community involvement in center's programs; The center is engaging the community in the planning process.
3.	Community is part of center's programs planning process; Community members are represented on the Center Advisory Board; Community involvement is consistent with program plans.
4.	Active volunteerism in center program and management; High and constant utilization of the center by different populations (learning and teaching from each other)
5.	A branch of center is established in the community or school.

3. Business Plan	
1.	Used for HUD approval and to start the center
2.	Used as internal strategic planning and program operations-tracking tool
3.	Used as external marketing document to attract partners, allies and center funding.
4.	Used as a process to involve residents, stakeholders, and others in programming



	priorities, strategies, financial planning and fundraising.
1 1	Used as a tool to evaluate center performance, learn continuous improvement , and innovate programs and outreach.

4. Evaluation	
1.	Assess resident and community needs as well as readiness of sponsor support for the center; performance indicators in place.
2.	Rate quarterly performance and review progress against Business Plan and programming goals; tracking results/outcomes.
3.	Address program impact and results to show return on investment for partners and stakeholders publicize jobs, test score improvement, school achievement, health improvement, crime reduction, etc.
4.	Evaluating funding sources to strategically focus on sustaining the center; show ROI for partners and stakeholders.
5.	Re-assess center programs, customers, and center operations to re-focus on greatest needs.

5. Advisory Board	
1.	Limited site-specific membership on board; Used for planning and direction; Strong community leadership center.
2.	Active resident, property manager, and community organization and members; board-level center champions emerging.
3.	Board members who know how to access resources and build alliances; Board members with management experience to provide insight into the center's operation and management.
4.	Implementation of two advisory boards: resident programs and planning (operation vs. strategy); boards evaluate center performance and recommend actions on regular basis; board recruits new members with broad experience and skills based on center needs.
5.	Advisory Board re-evaluates and renews center programming and strategy; new board members who will provide innovative ideas, funding approaches and networks.

6. Program Development		
1.	Initial programming designed based on feedback regarding resident and community needs; informal needs assessment and asset mapping process leading to programming decisions.	
2.	Center programs are structured and prioritized according to resident needs; active programs drives center orientation; increases breadth and diversity of programs.	
3.	High level of resident utilization and satisfaction in center programming; center	



	accurately assesses and revises programs as resident and community needs change; center has project and program ideas to develop in the next 3 years; programs tied to results in job growth, diplomas and other measurements.
4.	Center focuses on reinventing itself changes and restructures program; program offerings may increase based on renewal of the mission and purpose of the center; center uses partners to deliver programs.
5.	Programs directly relate to the residents serving the outside community; center has at least 25% more/new programs than when it started; center addressing alternative ways of delivering programs (satellite centers, networking with other groups, internet distribution)

7. Staffing		
1.	center champion: person or small group of people with Neighborhood Networks vision for center preparation and launch.	
2.	1-2 full-time employees; one-on-one volunteer program, which is delivered through a partner or by individuals in the community	
3.	Staff expertise in management, program development, funding and partnership development; volunteer instructors with set curriculum; institutional relationships for volunteers; staff have specific job functions.	
4.	Staff is reorganized; transfer of management responsibility from early champions to managers and administrators; center enhances its management team with new or advisory managers;	
5.	Plans to minimize staff turnover and recruit new staff from partners, residents and community; emerging leaders from volunteers, partners, and current staff.	

8. Funding	
1.	Limited resources/funding from owners/ property managers and HUD.
2.	Center mainly funded by HUD through residual receipts account, funds borrowed from the Reserve for Replacement account, excess income, rent increase, request for special rent adjustment or owner's equity.
3.	Budget growth; moving toward break even; in-kind contributions of resources and capital equipment; center beginning to receive additional funding from alternative sources – partners and allies, grants, early center alumni.
4.	center at break-even; more diverse portfolio of funders; active, well-managed process to address funding and other resource needs; using business plan as instrument to attract funding.
5.	Center achieves and maintains sustainability; great diversity of funders; consistent support from partners, allies, and other funding sources.

9. Computers	
1.	Equipment to meet basic program needs.



2.	Computers are proportional to use and programming needs.		
1 1	Access to the Internet; quality: computers within 18 months of new equipment on the market.		
	Center replenishes its technology portfolio on a regular bases; equipment needs directly linked to programming and resident needs.		
	Technology of the center meets advanced program needs; Computers are networked and Internet ready.		

10. Partnerships				
1.	Beginning to look for community members for potential partnerships			
2.	2 partners in the community that directly contribute to the centers goals and mission; alliance/joint venture with other community organizations (to join with to provide programs).			
3.	Marketing the center and gaining more partners in the process; Beginning brand name identity.			
4.	Active networking with other centers at a similar level of growth and development; sharing of ideas and approaches.			
5.	Local or regional mentoring of other Neighborhood Networks centers or other similar social service organizations; center brand is established through Public Relations, publications and awards; the center has built a permanent tie with a corporate sponsor.			

After you have completed this evaluation and identified the strengths of your center, it might be wise to meet with center stakeholders, such as residents. Discuss the results and see if they agree with the accurateness of the evaluation. Also, brainstorm ideas on ways to improve your center. This evaluation forms the basis of Manual 2 by showing you how to focus your energy entering your center's second year.

#### 8.2.5 Promoting your Findings

Results are important to audiences seeking evidence of a program's success, so they should be reported effectively. Organize the text of your findings and identify it clearly, list items with "bullets" and use bar or pie charts to illustrate data that can be counted or measured. Qualitative, or anecdotal data, such as success stories describing a program, presents wonderful mental pictures. Remember:

Results of a small-scale evaluation cannot be broadly applied.
 There may be contributing factors that resulted in positive change. Acknowledge these other factors in the report, noting that the evaluated program is one of them.



These are just a few suggestions on how to communicate your results.

Make sure to publicize and market the positive results of your center – see Section 5 for suggestions on how to tell others about your successes. In Section 5, you can learn how to use tools that will put your center on the media's map:

How to effectively design, write and distribute a newsletter
How to write a press release
How to contact local media and convince them to cover the

center



#### Section 9: Timeline

This section provides a sample timeline for the first year of a Neighborhood Networks center's planning and operation. The timeline serves as a management tool to track the progress of center planning and implementation. It is important for center planners to develop a timeline and assign responsibility for specific activities to team members. This establishes accountability for tasks and helps hold individuals accountable for their commitments. There will occasionally be setbacks or missed deadlines, and the timeline can be modified accordingly.

It is important to note that centers develop at different rates due to multiple factors: funding sources, resident involvement, commitment from property owners and other reasons. This timeline for developing a Neighborhood Networks center is to be used as an example, and does not have to be set in stone. It is recommended that some of these steps be completed in order because the outcomes of the activities are needed to begin the next steps.

### 9.1 Sample Timeline

As you will notice, the sample timeline is very front-loaded with most of the work seeming to happen in the first four months of planning. Be aware that while the first few months will be very busy, it will involve completing many short-term tasks. The remaining eight months of the year will involve running the day to day operations of the center, planning and teaching programs and working with partners. Don't be dismayed, the work of a Neighborhood Networks center director may be time-consuming, but it is also completely rewarding.

Please see the next page for sample timeline.



	Months 1-4	Months 5-8	Months 9-12
Asset Mapping	Design an asset mapping system     Identify local resources     Design budget (see Budget Expense Worksheet)     Forecast the budget     Develop a funding plan	Fund the budget     Implement a funding plan	<ul> <li>Evaluate the accuracy of the budget</li> <li>Reassess the funding plan</li> </ul>
Program Development	Conduct resident survey –     demographic and program     Plan programs     Begin to conduct programs	<ul><li>Plan programs</li><li>Begin to conduct new programs</li><li>Reassess existing programs</li></ul>	<ul> <li>Plan programs</li> <li>Reassess existing programs</li> <li>Evaluate existing and former programs</li> </ul>
Applying for and Obtaining Nonprofit Status	<ul> <li>Obtain IRS forms</li> <li>Fulfill the prerequisites for filing</li> <li>Write and submit articles of incorporation</li> <li>Choose board members</li> <li>Draft bylaws and mission statements</li> <li>Submit 501(c)(3) application</li> </ul>	Check in with Secretary of State for status of 501(c)(3) application	Check in with Secretary of State for status of 501(c)(3) application
Partnerships including Grant Writing	Use the asset map to locate potential partners within your community     Contact potential partners and ask to give them more information regarding your center	<ul> <li>Meet with interested potential partners</li> <li>Draft and sign MOU with partner</li> <li>Begin collaborating and providing services to your residents</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Continue working with the partner</li> <li>Reassess the partnership status and success</li> <li>Consider resigning, redrafting, or reneging the MOU</li> </ul>
Evaluation and Measurable Outcomes	Plan center goals and objectives	Think about how programs, partnerships, etc. fit with your goals and objectives	<ul> <li>Collect data regarding your centers activities for the year</li> <li>Analyze the data and note the successes of your program</li> <li>Publicize your successes</li> </ul>